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In Remembrance of His

Respected Friend

Captain Schuk R. N.

July 11th 1845

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MEMOIR

OF THE LIFE AND CHARACTER

OF THE

RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE;

WITH SPECIMENS OF HIS POETRY AND LETTERS,

AND AN

ESTIMATE OF HIS GENIUS AND TALENTS,

COMPARED WITH THOSE OF HIS

GREAT CONTEMPORARIES.

BY JAMES PRIOR, ESQ.

SECOND EDITION,

ENLARGED TO TWO VOLUMES,

BY A VARIETY OF ORIGINAL LETTERS, ANECDOTES, PAPERS,
AND OTHER ADDITIONAL MATTER.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR BALDWIN, CRADOCK, AND JOY.

1826.

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C. Baldwin, Printer,
New Bridge-street, London.

TO

JOHN WILSON CROKER, Esq.

LL.D. F.R.S. M.P. &c. &c. &c.

SECRETARY OF THE ADMIRALTY.

SIR,

An attempt to sketch the life and character of one of the greatest men of modern times may, with peculiar propriety, be addressed to one of his distinguished countrymen, who is himself connected, not only with that part of Ireland where Mr. Burke spent his earlier years, but also with his family; who likewise acquired his relish for learning in the same venerable academic retreat; who possesses much of his taste, much of his acknowledged love for the Fine Arts, much of his literary talents, and no ordinary share of his laborious devotion to public business.

That it is wholly worthy of your acceptance, or of the memory of the distinguished man of whom it treats, I am by no means

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vain enough to believe. To render full justice to his various genius and acquirements, would demand some of his own powers. No wonder, therefore, if, under so illustrious a burthen, *my* pen should break down. But the intention, at least, may be excused by the admirers of a statesman, whom to remember is to honour; and whom to honour is but another name by which to express our reverence for those venerable institutions of our country, which, as forming its pride and boast, he laboured so strenuously to defend; and which, through their influence on the national spirit, proved the salvation of Europe in the great struggle, now happily past. I have the honour to be, Sir,

With much respect,

Your most faithful

and obedient Servant,

JAMES PRIOR.

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ERRATA.

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Page	69,	line 28	from top,	for *cource* read *source*.
	87,	18		for *Ireand* read *Ireland*.
	357,	4		for *injury* read *inquiry*.
	382,	29		omit *was*.
	496,	18		for *villany* read *villainy*.

VOL. II.

Page	346,	line 18	from top,	for *and* read *or*.
	88,	23		for *rules* read *rulers*.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO

THE SECOND EDITION.

In presenting a second and much enlarged edition of this work to the public, the writer cannot omit to express his acknowledgments for the favourable reception experienced by the first; not only from the periodical censors of literature who assume to guide the public taste, but from the private testimonies of approbation afforded by persons of the very first consideration and talents in the country, whose opinions would seem to be confirmed by the sale of a large impression of the work in no very considerable space of time.

This encouragement naturally induced a corresponding diligence on his part, to endeavour, by every available means, to add to its interest and correctness; and the inquiry and research resorted to with this view, though laborious, have not, it will be perceived, been in vain. The additional matter collected, almost the whole of which is original, adds a second volume to the work, and has necessarily caused a new arrangement in many parts for its introduction in the order of time, while other passages

Burke for the part he took on the question of the French Revolution, although it might be supposed that observation and the progress of events, independent of all argument, had confirmed the accuracy of his views on that matter beyond further cavil or dispute.

It was not therefore with any great degree of surprise that he lately saw an attempt, under cover of a criticism on his book, to maintain that Mr. Burke was so far mistaken in his assertion of there being no good likely to result from the Revolution, that France had at length acquired by it that freedom for which she had so long contended. This statement of the matter is quite a perversion of his argument. He never said, or thought of saying, that she was condemned to such a state of perpetual, irreversible slavery, that no accident could extricate her from it. What he really said and enforced was, that her Revolution, of which she was at first so proud, contained no one principle of which a wise or good man could approve ; that all its acts, means, and purposes, were equally indefensible ; and that, *of itself*, it was not likely to lead to any system of rational freedom. Experience has taught us that it *did not* of itself introduce, or attempt to introduce, any such system.

As to the other clause in the critic's remark, about France having contended for the establishment of her constitutional freedom, it is so notoriously contrary to fact, that the wonder has been how perseveringly she struggled against it. She never,

in fact, seriously set about seeking it; neither did she, by the exertion of any wisdom, talent, or intelligence of her own, win it. The freedom, or at least the rudiments of freedom, which she now enjoys, was thrust upon her. A series of unexpected and fortuitous circumstances, which she not only did not forward, but on the contrary opposed by every means in her power, led to the production and establishment of the Charter. That important measure, therefore, so far from being her own work, was the work of the combined armies of Europe.

It may be doubted, indeed, whether she ever possessed any clear conception of the blessings of a free constitution, or understood anything about how it was to be introduced or managed. For with the example of England before her, which might be considered a sufficient guard against committing gross mistakes, she plunged every succeeding year from her first efforts deeper and deeper into error; floundering from simple financial embarrassments into general anarchy, from anarchy into a system of the bloodiest massacre and tyranny, from this into the crude and impracticable scheme of a directory, from a directory into a mawkish imitation of the consular government of ancient Rome, and from this product of folly, into the next and natural stage, a grinding military despotism. In all this series of changes there was no approach to the establishment of consistent, steady, practical liberty. And at the beginning of 1814 she had neither in fact nor in appearance advanced one step nearer to obtaining it, than in 1714, or any other

period of her history, nor was likely so to do, had not the wild ambition of her ruler provoked his own downfal and led to the general change in her institutions. Consequently, France has no claim whatever to be considered her own liberator; she struggled hard, on the contrary, to continue enslaved, and was at length only drubbed out of her chains. And a constitutional system, the most valuable present that could possibly be made to any nation, worth more than all the conquests she ever effected had she been permitted to retain them all, has been the voluntary gift of her conquerors.

So little, therefore, did her revolution, with all its spoliations, proscriptions, terrors, massacres, and wars, for more than twenty-two years, effect for its nominal aim—that of giving freedom and security to her people. And so fully was the anticipation of Mr. Burke verified, that an event which inflicted and permitted so many evils, could scarcely, if left to itself, be productive of good.

The Addenda contain some particulars which were mislaid during the progress of the work; and likewise a few others which came to hand too late to be inserted in their proper places.

PREFACE.

FEW things interest the curiosity of mankind more, or prove so instructive in themselves, as to trace the progress of a powerful mind by the honourable exertion of its native energies, rising amid serious obstructions and difficulties from a very private condition to stations of public eminence and trust, and in its progress acquiring the power to rule, or to influence, the destiny of nations.

Such a person, as sprung not from the privileged few, but from among the mass of the people, we feel to be one of ourselves. Our sympathies go along with him in his career. The young imagine that it may possibly be their own case; the old, with a glance of retrospective regret, may fancy, that with a little more of the favour of fortune it might have been theirs; and at any rate we are anxious to ascertain the causes of his superiority, to treasure up his experience, to profit by what he experienced to be useful, to avoid what he found to be disadvantageous. And the lesson becomes doubly instructive to that large class of society who are born to be the architects of their own fortune, when it impresses the great moral truth, that natural endowments, however great, receive their highest polish and

power, their only secure reward, from diligent study —from continued, unwearied application—a plain, homely faculty within the reach of all men; one whose fruits, as they bear testimony at once to the industry of the possessor, and to the intrinsic value of the possession, are above all others likely to wear well. Of the great results of such endowments, fostered and directed by such cultivation, we have not a more distinguished example than Edmund Burke.

To an attentive reader of our political and literary history during the sixty years that are past, no name will more frequently attract his attention, whether we consider the large space he occupied in the public eye, the original genius he possessed, the diversified talents he displayed, the great events with which the whole of his public life was connected, and the alternate eulogy and abuse by which, particularly since the period of the French Revolution, his reputation has been assailed.

Two biographies of this remarkable man have been written; one of them a quarto volume of slander, dictated by the most envenomed party spirit, and probably meant at the moment to answer some party purpose; the other more just to his deserts; but both very deficient in facts, and especially so as to his earlier life, very little being stated, or indeed known of him, until his connexion with the Marquis of Rockingham, and subsequent entry in Parliament. Obvious as this deficiency in political biography was, accident alone suggested to the present writer

the attempt to clear up part of this obscurity. Contemplating his qualities, both natural and acquired, and his career at large, as very extraordinary and successful, he drew up a character of him at some length in the autumn of 1819, which being thrown by for above two years without further notice, came then under the examination of a friend, who recommended that it should be enlarged and altered from the form it then bore: for that many parts as it stood would be obscure to the general reader, many be liable to mistake or misapplication, and some nearly unintelligible, if not grounded upon a memoir. This additional labour was undertaken certainly without regret. Some new materials were already in the writer's hands, and by application to various friends in England and Ireland, a variety of others, chiefly unknown to the world, and of undoubted authenticity, were procured; and, as illustrative of the opinions, the criticisms, and the style of correspondence, as well of the friendly as of the more formal description of his principal, a few of his letters have been added, several of them little or not at all familiar to the public eye.

An extended biography, embracing a minute exposition of all his labours in Parliament, in Westminster Hall on the prosecution of Mr. Hastings, or in the press, together with details respecting American, India, French, or other important public affairs with which he was much concerned, was not deemed necessary. It may be said, indeed, that to write the life of a great statesman and orator, with-

out giving the substance of his speeches in the great council of the nation, is scarcely to do him justice, and were they not to be found elsewhere, the remark would be just. But these make part of the history of the country. A few of the principal of them, given at length, are to be found in his works; and the remainder may be seen, although in a very imperfect form indeed, as all such things must be when reporting was imperfect and publication wholly interdicted, in the four volumes collected and published (for Longman and Co.) by a different editor in 1816. And independent of this, the appalling form of two, three, or even more quartos, to which such a design would inevitably extend, was sufficient of itself to deter the writer from any such attempt, bearing in mind the observation of the eminent subject of his sketch, that "a great book is a great evil." His aim was, therefore, not to make a great book, but a compact one; to condense within a moderate compass all that was necessary to be known, and which many readers would decline to seek in the more ponderous forms just mentioned. In doing this he thought it better simply to allude to the chief public exertions of Mr. Burke, accompanied by a few words of explanation or illustration, sometimes drawn from himself, rather than to aim at entering into their details.

Great as is the reputation of this eminent man, it stands, so far as party feelings are concerned, in rather a singular predicament. It is well known that he would not go all lengths with any body of men, and constantly declined to fall in with any

popular humour, of whose tendency he had the smallest doubt, although a contrary plan would have insured to him, as it did to others, a great increase of popularity; that he had an utter abhorrence of any thing resembling the undue exercise of power or arrogant domination, no matter from what quarter it proceeded; and that, by endeavouring to preserve a certain balance of powers in the state as well as in different orders of the community, and in the different interests, religious, political, and commercial, of the kingdom, by stepping in to the assistance of the weak against the strong, which is beyond dispute the duty of honest patriotism and sound wisdom, he incurred censure from the more violent or domineering of every class. He was assailed by the zealots of power for opposing the coercion of America, and for prosecuting Mr. Hastings: by the zealots of licentious freedom for opposing the French Revolution; by zealots in religion for advocating the cause of the dissenters and Roman Catholics; and by zealots of various descriptions in affairs of less moment. Many other reasons might be adduced why he was not always at the head of that party whose cause he chiefly espoused; the chief of which perhaps were, that he wanted that consequence from birth, fortune, and family connexion, which, along with great abilities, and some amiable private qualities, centred in Mr. Fox.

While, therefore, the two great divisions in politics of Whig and Tory, the former more especially, have deemed it a species of display of their allegiance to en-

deavour to depress his name for the purpose of exalting those of their particular leaders: and a more violent, though small body, known under various harsh and odious appellations unnecessary to be repeated here, have sworn a kind of eternal enmity to his name, for the overthrow which their doctrines experienced at his hands during the revolutionary fever in France, no special party remained, on whom devolved the obligation of upholding his fame. The old Whig connexion, indeed, of which he was so long the tongue and the soul, ought to have performed this duty, but they either wanted vigour, or had become merged in other parties. Depreciation and abuse from his political adversaries have in consequence been suffered to remain uncontradicted. If he did not write and speak himself into repute, nobody else perhaps can do it for him: nobody else certainly has attempted it. He has been left to the buoyancy of his own merits; to sink or swim in public opinion by his intrinsic powers. "For what I have been," said he, "I put myself upon my country;" and among the educated and dispassionate part of it he has no reason to complain of the decision. He has worked his way into general esteem, not by the applauding pens of intoxicated followers, but by more eloquent though less noisy advocates; by the slow but steady and sure evolution of national sentiment, by the living and flourishing evidences to his deserts, of a constitution preserved from demolition or inroad, an unshaken throne, an unpolluted altar, an unplundered nobility and gentry, and the continuance of those moral ties

and habitudes which bind together and form the safeguard of the whole.

Misrepresentation, indeed, may answer its end for a time. And were it not indicative of something of a malevolent feeling, it would be sometimes amusing to observe the ignorance or prejudice respecting the sentiments of Mr. Burke on a variety of public matters which prevails among many persons, who at a venture attribute to him any thing that happens to be unpopular at the moment—circumstances in which he had no participation or interest, and principles which he repeatedly opposed and disclaimed. In this spirit a reverend president of a political society at Liverpool not long ago stigmatised him as a deserter from the cause of parliamentary reform: and more than one of the orators of the Common Council of London, amid a few other flying reproaches just as much founded in truth, repeated the accusation. At two or three of the county meetings held some time back, he was spoken of as a sinecure placeman and an enemy to liberty. At one of the largest book establishments in London, on inquiring for a volume in which it happened to be said there was something concerning him, "a satire, sir, I suppose," was the reply; as if satire was the legitimate coin with which his public labours deserved to be repaid.* In

* A similar circumstance occurred again to the writer very lately at one (the very first perhaps) of these establishments. A volume containing some remarks upon him being handed down,—"He was an extraordinary man," observed the bibliopolist, "but like all the rest of them, ready to change his opinions when it suited

a private company of that consideration in society in which the writer least expected to hear observations thrown out of an illiberal or wholly untrue description, the motives of Mr. Burke in the impeachment of Mr. Hastings were sharply arraigned by some members of what is called the *Indian interest*, though on being pushed for facts, none of the party could assign any thing like an improper motive. In another company, less select, but of some consideration, he was admitted to be a most surprising man, but unhappily opposed to the reformation of all abuses in government. In a third, he was an ingenious and able writer, but *too flowery* in his style. In a fourth, his political conduct was said to be regulated by regard merely to his own interests. In a fifth, probably from the want of some better handle for censure, it was gravely urged as a drawback upon his fame, that he originally possessed no private property; nay, that he was humble enough to receive the profits of his literary labours, and that at length he accepted of a pension;—so that, by this ingenious and discriminating effort of logic, the original sin charged against him of want of fortune was not permitted to be remedied, either by the fair exertion of those talents with which Providence had endowed him, or by the public gratitude

his purpose."—These people keep books, but do not read them.—Yet the estimate usually formed of the characters of all statesmen (some of the first living names came in, on this occasion, for a share of the censure) by persons who pass among their acquaintance as being sensible and well informed, is commonly of this description.

of his country. All these circumstances came lately under the eye and ear of the writer. They are samples of what is heard every day in the ill-r ad, or ill-considered, remarks of drawing-rooms and tea-tables; and are only worthy of notice as coming occasionally from persons who assume a lead in conversation, and who would have felt not a little indignant at being told, what was nevertheless fact, that they were disseminating untruths or nonsense.

Another order of persons, of more influence and information, chiefly of the class of public writers, who have in view to exalt another great political name,* think it necessary for the accomplishment of their purpose to lower, though indirectly and circuitously, the reputation of Mr. Burke.

From these persons we hear of him frequently as a man of great genius, of many acquirements, of brilliant fancy, and amusing talents; carefully keeping out of view, as if they were wholly unknown, those more useful and more profound qualities of mind which constitute his chief claims to distinction. Sometimes, again, he is what they are pleased to term a philosophical politician, meaning by this to imply something different from a practical statesman; sometimes he is even admitted to be the greatest writer of the age, while scarcely an allusion is made to that parliamentary eloquence which made his name as an orator more celebrated on the continent of Europe, while he continued in

* Mr. Fox.

the House of Commons, than those of either of his great rivals, and which enabled him to take the lead for so many years in that assembly, besides drawing the then (1774) very unusual honour of an invitation to represent, free of expence, one of the chief cities of the kingdom. At other times, hints are dropped of how much better his genius would have been exerted in many other ways than in politics. This opinion is at best but mere assumption and trifling. For though doubtless calculated to excel in any thing to which he vigorously applied his mind, we have no right to speculate on what he might have been, but what he really was. And his whole career proves, that, added to an early bias towards the consideration of public affairs, there is perhaps little doubt but that more of the strength of his mind was put forth by the contentions inseparable from politics than could have been effected by any other species of discussion. But independent of this, if he has left behind in the track of life which he ultimately adopted, more materials for fame than either of his contemporaries or predecessors, namely, the finest orations in the English language, the ablest political disquisitions, the introduction or support of a series of important constitutional measures for nearly thirty years together, and a reputation perhaps above any other for practical wisdom, not resting on the mere opinion of the moment but on record in his speeches and writings;—surely it savours of folly or impertinence to say that he would have succeeded better in any other pursuit.

It is time that this ungenerous warfare against his fame should cease. No man, indeed, intimately conversant with public affairs, has been misled by it, as the debates in parliament almost every night of every session testify; but it has served its turn pretty effectually among that multitude of persons who are little acquainted with such matters, and who, suspecting no sinister views, take for granted what is told them without undergoing the labour of inquiring for themselves. Should the present attempt enable any of these to appreciate more justly the powers or character of one to whom his country is under very important obligations, the writer will not deem his labour misapplied. *His* testimony at least is impartial. He has no party purpose to answer; no influence to court; no interest to push, except it be that common interest felt by every generous mind, of rendering to a distinguished and virtuous character those honours which are its due.

		In what Vol. contained.
Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful	1756.	I
**An Account of the European Settlements in America, 2 vols. 8vo	1757.	
Essay towards an Abridgment of English History, from the Invasion of Julius Cæsar to the End of the Reign of King John	1757.	X
**Annual Register†—at first the whole Work, afterwards only the Historical Article ..	1758, &c.	
Fragments of a Tract (75 octavo pages) on the Popery Laws in Ireland	1761.	IX
Short Account of a late Short Administration	1766.	II
**Humourous Reply to the preceding, signed Whittington, a Tallow Chandler, of Cateaton-street; and Ship News for 1765—both believed to be Mr. Burke's.....	1766.	
Observations on a late Publication, intituled the Present State of the Nation	1769.	II
Thoughts on the Cause of the present Discontents	1770.	II
**Idea of a Perfect Wife	1770.	
Notes of a Speech on the Middlesex Election,	Feb. 1771.	X
——————— a Bill for explaining the Powers of Juries in Prosecutions for Libel .....March	1771.	X
Letters on the same Subject for the Newspapers	1771.	X
Notes of a Speech on the Acts of Uniformity,	Feb. 1772.	X
——————— a Bill to quiet the Possessions of the Subject against Dormant Claims of the Church .....Feb.	1772.	X
——————— for the Relief of certain Protestant Dissenters	1773.	X
——————— on a Bill for shortening the Duration of Parliament	1773.	X

† Doubts being still expressed of his participation in this publication, fac-similes of his hand-writing of the receipts for the copy-money of the volume for 1761, alluded to at page 61, vol. i. is appended to this list.

	In what Vol. contained.
Letter on the Irish Absentee Tax, to Sir Charles Bingham.....Oct. 1773.	IX
Speech on American Taxation .....April 1774.	II
Speeches at Bristol .....Nov. 1774.	III
Speech on American Conciliation ....March 1775.	III
Letter to the Marquis of Rockingham, on the proposed Secession from Parliament of Members who opposed the American War.....Jan. 1777.	IX
Address to the King—Address to the British Colonists in North America; both on the same Subject ..... 1777.	IX
Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol .....April 1777.	III
Letter to the Hon. C. J. Fox, on Political Affairs.....Oct. 1777.	IX
**Epitaph on Mr. Dowdeswell ..... 1778.	
Two Letters to Gentlemen at Bristol, on Bills relative to the Trade of Ireland, April and May 1778.	III
Letter to the Right Hon. Edmund Pery, Speaker of the Irish House of Commons, on a Bill for the Relief of the Roman Catholics of Ireland .....July 1778.	IX
Letter to Thomas Burgh, Esq., in Vindication of the Author's Parliamentary Conduct relative to the Affairs of Ireland ....Jan. 1780.	IX
Speech on Œconomical Reform .....Feb. 1780.	III
Letter to John Merlott, Esq., on the Affairs of Ireland .....April 1780.	IX
Letter to the Chairman of the Buckinghamshire Meeting for procuring Parliamentary Reform .....April 1780.	IX
Sketch of a Code of Laws for the Regulation of the Slave Trade, and the Government of the Negroes in the West India Islands 1780.	IX
Letters and Reflections on the Execution of the Rioters.....July 1780.	IX
Speeches at Bristol .....Sept. 1780.	III

		In what Vol. contained.
rate Paper, of nearly 200 octavo pages, was produced by Mr. Burke	30th April 1794.	XIV
Letter to William Smith, Esq. M. P. (now one of the Barons of the Court of Exchequer in Ireland), on the Subject of the Popery Laws	Jan. 1795.	IX
Second Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe, Bart. on the same Subject	May 1795.	IX
Letter to William Elliott, Esq. occasioned by a Speech in the House of Lords by the *** of *** (Duke of Norfolk)	May 1795.	VII
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Thoughts and Details on Scarcity	Nov. 1795.	VII
Letter to a Noble Lord (Earl Fitzwilliam), on the Attacks made upon him (Mr. Burke), and his Pension, in the House of Lords, by the Duke of Bedford, and the Earl of Lauderdale	1796.	VIII
Three Letters on a Regicide Peace	1796.	VIII
Fourth Letter on the same Subject	1797.	IX
Letter on the Affairs of Ireland	1797.	IX

Two more octavo volumes are to be filled by the concluding or summing-up Oration on the Impeachment, which Mr. Burke commenced on the 28th of May, 1794, and continued for nine days.

Received from Mr. Dodsley the sum of fifty pounds on account of the Annual Register of 1761. this 28th March 1761

Edm. Burke.

Received from Messrs. R & J. Dodsley the sum of fifty pounds sterling in full for the annual Register of 1761 this 30 day of March. 1762

Edm. Burke.

CHAPTER I.

Family and Birth of Mr. Burke — The Nagles — Castletown Roche School-master — Ballitore — Anecdotes — Studies, and Poetical Exercises at College—Literary Society in Dublin—First Political Writings—Entry at the Middle Temple.

EDMUND BURKE, the most extraordinary man perhaps of an age fertile in extraordinary men, and in many respects the greatest whom Ireland has produced, was descended from a respectable family long settled in the county of Galway,* whence it removed to the county of Limerick, and once had possession of a considerable estate in the latter, but which became forfeited during one of those civil convulsions that have so often caused property to change possessors in that country. This took place some time in the troubled period between 1641 and 1653.

The Burkes, or Bourkes, though now thickly strewed over the whole of Ireland, particularly the southern part of it, were not an aboriginal, or, as their English invaders termed them, a *mere Irish* family; but descended from the Norman Burghs, or De Burghs, of which Burke is merely a corruption, who went thither as adventurers under Strongbow, in the reign of Henry II.; not as temporary marauders whose visitations might soon be over, but to conquer an inheritance,—to seize upon such pos-

* The late Earl of Clanricarde, John Smyth de Burgh, (a Galway family) frequently addressed Mr. Burke as 'Cousin.'

sessions as their strength would permit, and permanently to hold what they had thus seized.

An ancestor of Mr. Burke's family is said to have been Mayor of the city of Limerick in 1646, when it was occupied by a native military force, which seeming disinclined to receive either the parliamentary army, or that under the Marquis of Ormond who aimed at securing it for Charles I. in whose interest the Irish army professed to be, the Mayor exerted himself vigorously in favour of the royal cause. A popular riot however ensued, instigated by the intrigues of the Papal Nuncio, who, though professing devotion to the same cause, had some other ambitious purposes to answer; and Burke was not only roughly handled at the moment, but lost much of his property, was deposed from his office and imprisoned, his place being filled by a Monk, who led on the rioters.

The great grandfather of Edmund possessing some property in the county of Cork, retired thither, and subsequently settled near to the village of Castletown Roche, the seat of the Roche family, prettily situated, and distinguished in the civil wars for having been defended in 1649 by Lady Roche against the parliamentary forces; which, with other offences of a similar kind by her husband, caused his outlawry, and the forfeiture of the family estates. The village stands about four or five miles from Donneraile, five or six from Mallow, and nearly about the same distance from the ruined old castle of Kilcolman, the residence, for a considerable time, of the poet Spenser, where he was frequently visited by Sir Walter Raleigh, and other eminent characters,

of the reign of Elizabeth, connected with Ireland, and where he wrote the whole or the greater part of the "Fairy Queen." To the abode of the poet in this district of legends and tales, may be attributed some of the beauties of that great work; the innumerable superstitions and romantic traditions of the surrounding country unquestionably supplying him with numberless hints for that purpose; and to which, in more than one part of his writings, he indirectly alludes.

This property continuing in the Burke family, came into the possession of Edmund in 1765 on the death of his elder brother Garret, who died on the 27th April in that year, and lies buried on the spot. It was sold by him in 1792 or 1793 for something less than 4000*l.*: the annual value at that period was under 300*l.*, but of late it has produced above 700*l.* per annum.

His father Richard Burke, or Bourke,* as it was often indiscriminately spelt, was a Protestant, and educated for an attorney. Removing from Limerick, where he resided for some time, to Dublin, he took a house on Arran Quay, then a fashionable part of the town, and soon obtaining extensive practice, continued for several years in the first rank of his profession in that city. At an early period, he had become attached to a juvenile acquaintance, a Miss Nagle, of the respectable family of that name, still existing near Castletown Roche, and descended

* Many families still use the latter orthography, particularly that of the Earls of Mayo, the founder of which, also a Richard Bourke and LLD. died in 1727.

from the Attorney General to James II. To this lady he was married, at Mallow, about the year 1725 or 1726, and by her became the father of fourteen or fifteen children, all of whom died young except Garret, Edmund, Richard, a daughter, named Juliana, baptized in 1728,* and married to a Mr. French, a gentleman of respectability in the county of Galway. This lady possessed no ordinary talents. In the words of a gentleman (a member of the Irish Bar), who knew her long and intimately, to the writer, "Mrs. French, had nature destined her for the other sex, would have been as great an orator as her brother Edmund. In her conversation there was so much of elegance as well as of ability, that I often remarked it would have been difficult to transpose a word to advantage." Educated in the belief of her mother, as is commonly the case with females in Ireland where the parents are of different religious persuasions, she was a rigid Roman Catholic, exemplary in her duties, and kind and charitable to her poorer neighbours. On Christmas Day, in every year, she was accustomed to invite the halt, maimed, blind, and distressed of every description in the vicinity to a plentiful repast, in which she waited on them herself as a servant. "It is right," said she, "to humble ourselves now and then, and what day so appropriate for this duty as the anniversary of that on

* The following is a copy of the Church Register, Castletown Roche Parish, diocese of Cloyne:—

"Juliana, daughter of Richard and Mary Burke, baptized 1728.—God-father Edw. Fitton—God-mothers Mary Dunworth, Mary Nayler."

which our Saviour humbled himself so far as to take the form of man, in order to confer upon him the highest benefit."

Garret, who followed his father's profession and was well known in Dublin as a man of wit and drollery, died unmarried. Richard, who became equally distinguished in London as a wit, a politician, a writer, and a lawyer, in which latter capacity Lord Mansfield had formed and expressed to several members of the Bar now living, the highest opinion of him, and of whom some notices will hereafter occur, likewise died unmarried. The issue of Mrs. French alone survive, her grandson, Thomas Haviland Burke, Esq. of Lincoln's Inn, being the lineal representative of the family. With the descendants of the late Mr. John Nugent, Mrs. Burke's brother, a remote relationship to Mr. Burke by blood, as stated by that family, also exists; he having married Miss Lucy Nagle, daughter of Garret Nagle, Esq. of Moneamyny and Ballyduff, in Cork, first cousin on both father and mother's side to Edmund Burke. It is worthy of remark, that Sylvanus Spenser, elder son of the Poet, married Ellen Nagle, elder daughter of David Nagle, Esq. ancestor of the gentleman just mentioned, and great aunt to Mr. Burke's mother; so that marriage remotely connected these two celebrated names.

For his maternal relations, among whom many of his juvenile days were spent, Edmund always preserved a warm regard; and as several were devoted to various departments of the public service, advanced their interests as opportunities permitted. Among these was the present Admiral, Sir Edmund

Nagle; who spending much of his time at Beaconsfield in the intervals of sea-duty, amused his celebrated kinsman with naval anecdotes and affairs, in which the latter took so much interest, as to have acquired a large stock of nautical terms, often applied with great effect in his speeches and writings; while in return the young sailor received warm applause for several instances of gallant conduct. One of these Mr. Burke dwelt upon with peculiar delight to his friends; remarking that in ancient Rome it would have obtained not only a civic crown for the humanity displayed on the occasion, but a laurel crown for the courage. A person, it seems, had accidentally fallen overboard from a ship at sea in which Mr. Nagle was embarked, who finding he was in danger from a shark, which had just before been seen near the ship, immediately sprung into the water to rescue him, and happily succeeded. This circumstance being much talked of at the time, his late Majesty heard of it, and Mr. Nagle being pointed out to him, he entered into conversation, paying many compliments to his gallantry. "It was a hazardous attempt, Captain Nagle," observed the King. "I never thought of the hazard, please your Majesty." "But do you think you would run such a risk again, Captain Nagle?" "Please your Majesty, I would go to h--ll at any time to serve a friend," replied the plain though courageous seaman.

Edmund Burke was born in the house on Arran Quay, January 1, O. S. 1730. Those who are fond of tracing coincidences will not fail to remark, that, like his great contemporaries Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt, he was a younger son. It has likewise been generally

believed and circulated with confidence, that he inherited only a younger son's patrimony, or in other words little or nothing, and that in London previous to his entrance into Parliament, he was wholly dependant on his pen for the means of support. Were this report true, it would be creditable to his industry and perseverance. But such was not the case. The integrity and reputation of his father enabled him, after living in affluence and educating his children in a suitable manner, to leave behind at his death a considerable provision for them. The writer is assured from unquestionable authority, and the same fact was frequently mentioned by the late Dr. Lawrence to his friends, that Mr. Burke received from his family at various times a sum little short of 20,000*l.*, a larger patrimony than fell to the share of Mr. Pitt. This circumstance would not be worth adverting to were it not for the pains taken by political opponents to represent him as little better than a mere adventurer.

Very little is known of his early years, except his being of a delicate constitution, tending, as was believed, to consumption. The most troublesome symptom of the complaint was a pain in the side, which disabled him from taking the same degree of boyish exercise as his brothers, and when they therefore were at play, he was commonly seen reclining on a sofa perusing a book. To this Richard Burke alluded, when being found in a reverie shortly after an extraordinary display of powers in the House of Commons by his brother, and questioned by Mr. Malone as to the cause---" I have been wondering,"

said he, "how Ned has contrived to monopolize all the talents of the family; but then again I remember *when we were at play he was always at work.*"

His delicate state of health rendering necessary a longer stay than is customary under the paternal roof, he was first taught to read by his mother, a woman of cultivated understanding. It is likewise traditionally related as something remarkable and even ludicrous, that another instructor of this great master of the powers of the English language was an elderly female resident in the neighbourhood, who feeling a strong partiality for the boy, found amusement in communicating the rudiments of learning to his infant mind.

The air of the country, however, being deemed essential to give vigour to his frame, he was removed from the metropolis to the house of his grandfather at Castletown Roche. Here for the first time he was put to school; and the ruins of the schoolroom, or what is said to have been such, may be still traditionally pointed out to those who take an interest in prying into those early haunts which the subsequent developement of great genius serves to elevate into celebrity. His progress in knowledge, however, was not very considerable, his relations, from motives of kindness, directing his attention more to what was likely to improve his health than to inform his mind. Still he was not idle. The village school-master, whose name was O'Halloran, and who lived to an advanced age, was known to one or two of the older inhabitants living there a few years ago, who remembered him in their youth

as boasting upon all occasions that he was the first who had put a Latin grammar into the hands of Edmund Burke.

Another of this old man's stories, of the truth of which, from the known benevolence of heart of the pupil, as well as from the circumstantiality with which it was told by the master, there was no reason to doubt, related to the time of Mr. Burke going thither to look after his property in 1766. Divested of something of the circumlocution common to those who belong to, or mingle much with the lower classes in Ireland, but retaining some part of the phraseology, it was in substance this :—Hearing that *his boy*, as he called him, who had got into parliament, was come to look at the *ould* place, he thought he would just *step up a bit* to the house to see whether he would remember his poor master. Proceeding slowly up the avenue, doubtful of the reception he should meet with from a great man, he recognised him dressing in a room over the door of the house (long since in ruins), and the *boy* as quickly remembered his *ould* master's face again: *Sorrow a minute* did he wait, but ran down stairs, his shirt collar open, his beard half shaven, seized him eagerly by both hands, and " asked all about me, and about the little boys his school-fellows, and said you must stay all day with me, O'Halloran, and gossip about old times ;—and sure enough I did ; —but was this all, do you suppose ? No, to be sure it was not ;—didn't he put five golden guineas into my hand as I was coming away ? "

The gentleman to whom this anecdote was related, in the course of other inquiries in the neigh-

bourhood, asked a cottager, in order to try if the name was familiar among this class of people, whether he knew any thing of a noted man called Burke who once lived in that quarter? "To be sure I do;" was the reply, "Hasn't every body heard of Edmund Burke?"

At Castletown Roche he spent a considerable time, so much it is believed as five years; and the partiality which he always entertained for the spot in talking of it in his domestic circle, added to his long residence, and familiarity with the neighbouring objects, particularly Spenser's ruined castle, gave rise to the belief among many intimate friends of his having been born there. In Ireland this report is particularly current on account of the associations connected with the spot which gave birth to Spenser's celebrated poem, and which have justly caused it to be considered classic ground. It was countenanced also by some beautiful lines which he wrote at college on the river Blackwater, running to Youghall Bay, through the counties of Cork and Waterford, near to the spot where he resided, and into which falls the *Molla* or *Mulla*, a stream immortalized by the author of the Fairy Queen. On this river also, the famed Mrs. Wolstoncroft is said to have written some pretty lines when in the family of Lord Kingston; and at a more remote date it is familiarly associated with the names of Essex and Raleigh (who had possessions in the vicinity), and other celebrated characters from the reign of Elizabeth down to our own time.

Several other places in Ireland have equally, though incorrectly, contended for the honour of his

birth, such as Athlone; Limerick; Thurles in the county of Tipperary; the county of Carlow adjoining to Kildare; and the vicinity of Lismore. Something of this uncertainty is due to that unhappy neglect which Ireland too often exhibits towards her eminent men; something to Mr. Burke himself, who, from disregard of contemporary applause, or that unusual humility with which he was well known to regard himself and his exertions, never willingly obtruded his name into the magazines and newspapers of the day, nor would he furnish materials for such purpose to his friends. The consequence is, there is less known of him than of other public men of the time, even those who had not half his desert or half his reputation. Some particulars, in fact, are still unknown even to his most intimate acquaintance, and are likely to continue so.

From Castletown Roche he was removed to Dublin, and is said to have continued about a year at school in Smithfield, in that city, kept by a Mr. James Fitzgerald, when the reputation of the classical academy at Ballitore, and the improvement of his health, further impaired by rapid growth, induced his father to send him thither.

This village stands on an agreeable scite in the county of Kildare, 28 miles to the southward of Dublin, in a valley through which runs the small river Griese,—a prolific theme for school-boy punning. The scite was purchased early in the last century by two of the Society of Friends, John Barcroft and Amos Strettel, as a species of colony for its members, and the chief inhabitants are still of that persuasion. A school of a superior class being

wanting among this intelligent community, an honest and learned Quaker, Abraham Shackleton, was invited from Yorkshire, in 1726, to conduct it, whose capacity and diligence soon spread the reputation of the establishment over much of the southern and eastern parts of Ireland, by turning out from it several eminent men. It was continued by his son Richard Shackleton; by his grandson Abraham, who died in 1818; both men of superior original minds, and poetical powers; and still exists with undiminished reputation under the direction of the son-in-law of the latter, Mr. James White. The grand-daughter of the founder, Mrs. Mary Leadbeater, inherits the genius of her family, and is advantageously known to the public by a volume of "Poems," published in 1808; "The Landlord's Friend;" "Cottage Biography;" "Cottage Dialogues;" the latter work introduced to the world under the warm sanction of Miss Edgeworth, and with the others, imparting the most faithful views we possess of the interior of an Irish cottage, and the manners of that peculiar, and in many respects original people.

To this school Edmund, then in his 12th year, along with his brothers Garret and Richard, was removed the 26th May, 1741. It has been observed by Dr. Johnson, that the early years of distinguished men, when minutely traced, furnish evidence of the same vigour or originality of mind by which they are celebrated in after-life. Such was certainly the case with young Burke.

His habits, so far as can be remembered, indicated more of solidity than commonly belongs to that

period of life; his powers appeared not so much in brilliancy, as in steadiness of application, facility of comprehension, and strength of memory; indications which drew the commendation first, and, as his powers unfolded themselves, soon the warm regard of his master, under whose paternal care the improvement of his health kept pace with that of his mind; and the grateful pupil never forgot his obligations.

Among his schoolfellows were Dr. Brocklesby, the physician, afterwards so well known in the literary circles of London; the Rev. Michael Kearney, brother to one of the Bishops of Ossory, a modest and most ingenious man, of great literary acquirements and endowments of mind, who died in 1814 at a very advanced age; Thomas Bushe, father to the present Irish Judge of that name; and several others of equal talents, though filling inferior stations in life, among whom was a Mr. Matthew Smith, a country schoolmaster, who possessed his esteem, and with whom he corresponded. Another, a Mr. Zouch, who was still less fortunate in life, he kept for some years domesticated in his establishment at Beaconsfield, partly as Amanuensis, partly as steward, and whom he tried repeatedly to push forward in the world. Dr. Sleigh, an eminent physician of Cork, the friend of Goldsmith in more than one season of adversity, and the first friend of Barry, the painter, did not come to the school till Mr. Burke had quitted it, but they met in London afterwards, and became intimately acquainted, the latter frequently saying, "he knew few more ingenious and valuable men."

But his chief favourite and friend was Richard Shackleton, the only son of his master and his successor in the school, with whom a lively epistolary correspondence was kept up during the remainder of his life; whom he never failed to visit when he went to Ireland; who sometimes came to England to spend a short time at Beaconsfield with him; and for whose death in 1792, he expressed, in a very affectionate letter to the family, the most sincere regret; confessing to the shedding of tears on the occasion.

This gentleman, who felt an equal degree of attachment to his illustrious acquaintance, being often questioned during his life as to the boyish peculiarities of the great Burke, seemed to feel much interest in recounting them. To an intimate friend of his, to whom I am obliged for the communication of these and several other particulars, he was accustomed to give the following summary from personal observation, which, being three or four years older, he was enabled to do with sufficient accuracy; and as they are, perhaps, the only authentic notices which remain of the period in question, possess some little interest for those who love to trace back great talents from maturity to the bud.

His genius, observed Mr. Shackleton, appeared to be promising from the first; he was not very far advanced when he came to school, but soon evinced great aptitude to learn; and on many occasions a soundness and manliness of mind, and ripeness of judgment beyond his years. He read much while quite a boy, accumulated a great variety of knowledge, and delighted in exercising, and occasionally

exhibiting to his companions, superior powers of memory, particularly in what is called *capping* Latin verses. A very favourite study, as he himself once confessed in the House of Commons, was the old romances, Palmerin of England, and Don Belianis of Greece, upon which he had wasted much valuable time. An inquisitive and speculative cast of mind were not the least distinguishing of his peculiarities; he devoted much time to the eager perusal of history and poetry; the study of the classics seemed to be more his diversion than his business. He was of an affectionate disposition, rather fond of being alone, less lively and bustling than other boys of the same age, but good-natured, communicative of what he knew, and always willing to teach or to learn.

In the family of this gentleman are preserved a series of his letters, at least a considerable number of them, commencing at the age of 15, down to within two months of his death; and the earliest said to be distinguished by as strong a love of virtue, affection for his friend, and superior capacity for observation, as the last. To these the writer, from some family objection, has not been permitted to have access; but the same friend to whom Mr. Shackleton communicated the substance of some of them, as well as the specimens of young Burke's poetical powers which appear in the present volume, has favoured him with some of the circumstances to which they refer.

Few anecdotes of him, while at school, are preserved. It is recorded, however, that seeing a poor man pulling down his own hut near the village, and hearing that it was done by order of a great gentle-

man in a gold-laced hat (the parish conservator of the roads), upon the plea of being too near the highway, the young philanthropist, his bosom swelling with indignation, exclaimed, that were he a man, and possessed of authority, the poor should not thus be oppressed. Little things in children often tend to indicate, as well as to form, the mind of the future man; there was no characteristic of his subsequent life more marked, than a hatred of oppression in any form, or from any quarter.

The steward of the establishment at Ballitore, who sometimes condescended to be director of the school-boy sports, used to repeat this and similar anecdotes with no little pride of his old acquaintance when he had risen into celebrity. He delighted in hearing of him; he would sit for hours attentive to this his favourite theme; and particularly when the newspapers had any thing of more than usual interest respecting him to communicate, he was quite insensible to all other claims upon his attention. He was a hard-headed, North-of-Ireland presbyterian, named Gill, upon whom young Shackleton wrote verses, and young Burke chopped his boyish logic; the shrewd, though unlettered remarks in reply to which, gave him in their opinion some claim to the more philosophical appellation of Hobbes. By this name Mr. Burke used to inquire after him while at college; and never afterwards went to Ballitore, where he chiefly continued to reside, without giving him proofs of regard.

The last visit he made took place in 1786, after the opening of the impeachment of Mr. Hastings. The old steward, who regarded this measure as

another illustration of the humane spirit displayed by the boy, was then verging on his eightieth year, his eyes dim, his limbs feeble, and, as it proved shortly afterwards, tottering into the grave; but the announcement of the name of his youthful associate inspired the worn-out frame of the aged man with momentary vigour. Mr. Burke accosted him with his accustomed kindness, shook him often and cordially by the hand, and introduced his son, who showed equal attention to his father's humble but venerable friend. This condescension so much affected the old man's feelings, that for some time he was deprived of utterance; he bowed repeatedly, and at length brought out, that he was proud—very proud to see him—adding "you have many friends in Ireland, sir." "I am happy, Mr. Gill, that you are one of them.—You look very well.—Am I much changed since you last saw me?" Old William replied, after some attempt at examination, that he was almost too *dark* with age to observe; when Mr. Burke, with characteristic affability, took a candle and held it up to his own face, to give the aged servant a better view of it: a scene which the relator of the anecdote says, those who were present cannot easily forget.*

A spirit of emulation with his friend Shackleton, and natural taste together, made young Burke towards the close of his school career, if not a poet, at least poetical; though few, if any, of his verses

* Poems, by Mary Leadbeater (late Shackleton), 1808.—Cottage Biography, 1822, by the same.

of this date are known to exist. It was about this period, however, immediately before or after quitting school, that in a spirit of friendly rivalry they each translated the thirteenth Idyllium of Theocritus on the death of Adonis, reported to have possessed considerable merit. Some scenes of a play on the story of King Alfred, are also attributed to him about the same time, which were either lost or destroyed while on a visit to a relation residing at Ballyduff, near Thurles, in the county of Tipperary.

At Ballitore also he is believed to have imbibed other and more distinguished characteristics; particularly that regard for civil and religious liberty which marked his future life; and this from observing among the society of *friends*, in which he was domesticated, that differences of opinion on these points made neither worse subjects, nor worse men. Reflection, and the remembrance that relations on the side of both parents happened to be Roman Catholics, probably taught him to extend the same liberality of sentiment toward persons of that persuasion, then in a very oppressed and persecuted state. His opinions on this point are known to have been formed soon; and the fact exhibits an additional proof of early maturity of mind, in possessing the power to disengage itself from those prejudices and animosities existing in Ireland between protestant and catholic, at a time when, even among the nearest relations, they produced an unchristian, and, in fact, a hostile spirit.

To something of this he alluded in a debate after the riots in London (June 20, 1780), on a proposal

that no papist should be permitted to educate a protestant; and on this occasion spoke in very high terms of his preceptor, while he gives us some insight into the nature of his studies soon afterward.

"He had been educated (he said) as a protestant of the church of England by a dissenter who was an honour to his sect, though that sect was considered one of the purest. Under his eye he had read the Bible, morning, noon, and night, and had ever since been the happier and better man for such reading. He had afterwards turned his attention to the reading of all the theological publications on all sides, that were written with such wonderful ability in the last and present century; but finding at length that such studies tended to confound and bewilder rather than to enlighten, he had dropped them, embracing and holding fast a firm faith in the church of England."

Toward the middle of April, 1744, having been just three years at school, he quitted it, possessed of what Mr. Shackleton used to describe as "a large and miscellaneous stock of learning for his years," and next day, as he informed that gentleman by letter, entered Trinity college, Dublin, as pensioner, the expense of which is about 150*l.* per annum, that of a fellow commoner, the highest class of students, being about 200*l.* The following is the entry in the register; premising that there is a mistake of a year in his age, possibly done by design, 16 being the usual time of admission; and that the academical year beginning in July, the year is really 1744, though nominally a year sooner; his name also is

spelt according to the orthography of the other branches of the family.

1743,*

April 14,	Edmund, Bourke Pens.	Fil. Ric. Gene-ros.	Annum Agens 16.	Natus Dublin.	Educatus Sub ferula Mag. Shackleton	Dr. Pelis-sier.

Dr. Pelissier, who had the honour of having such a pupil, is represented by high college authority as a man of very ordinary acquirements, who when vice-provost in 1753, quitted the university for the living of Ardstraw, in the north of Ireland. To him Mr. Burke owed few obligations, except, as it is said, having recommended to him the acquisition of multiform knowledge, rather than to devote his attention to any particular branch,—a plan, which looking to the results as exemplified in the instances of Johnson and Burke, would seem not to be the worst for enlarging and strengthening the human faculties.

The university course, besides abstract christianity; the usual portion of mathematics, theoretical and practical; natural, moral, and political philosophy; dealt deeply in several old and rather uninstructive volumes of scholastic logic, fortified however by Locke on the Understanding; Burlamaqui and Locke were then the chief writers on government, the latter of which however has since been expunged from the list of college books. In classics the course comprehended all the chief Greek and Latin authors. Composition in those languages however is more neglected than in the English

* For the entry I am indebted to John Colhoun, Esq. of the Irish bar.

universities, the attention of the student in Dublin, as in Scotland, being directed more to a perfect acquaintance with their sentiments and beauties than to the niceties of grammar and idiom; an omission which the former learned bodies deem of more importance than perhaps it really is.

A general belief has prevailed, that, like Johnson, Swift, Goldsmith, and other eminent men, Mr. Burke attracted no particular notice, and exhibited at college no proofs of that superiority for which he was afterwards so celebrated. This may be partly true. Goldsmith, who was his contemporary, at least said so, more than once, in order perhaps to apologize for his own negligence; but Dr. Leland, who was then a fellow of the college, and necessarily a more competent judge, used to say that he was known as a young man of superior, but unpretending talents, and more anxious to acquire knowledge than to display it. Other evidence also exists that he did not pass among the crowd wholly undistinguished. On the 26th May, 1746, he was elected a scholar of the house; the qualification for which, being a successful examination in the classics before the provost and senior fellows, often confers a superior degree of reputation through life in that branch of learning on he who succeeds; and as candidates are not eligible till the third year of residence in the university, it will be observed, by referring to dates, that he obtained this distinction the moment the regulations permitted: the advantages of it, which continue for five years, are chambers and commons free, a small annuity, and a vote for the member of

parliament for the university. In addition to this, the writer has seen one of his prize books presented to him by the college for proficiency in the classics in 1745, a year before he was elected scholar.

It has been repeatedly said, like many other erroneous statements concerning this eminent man, that he quitted the university without a degree. The contrary is the fact. He commenced A. B. 23d February 1747—1748, and proceeded A. M. 1751. No academical irregularities have been laid to his charge, except if this can be called so, a participation with his fellow collegians in supporting Mr. Sheridan, father to the late celebrated Brinsley Sheridan, then manager of the Dublin theatre, in the famous riot in 1746, against a party who nearly destroyed the house, and drove him from the Irish stage; to the punishment of the delinquents Mr. Burke alludes in a letter to his friend Shackleton of this year.

His favourite studies, if college report may be trusted, were classics, history, philosophy, general literature, and from the speculative turn before alluded to, a pretty strong attachment to metaphysics; at least so far as they go toward clearing the judgment and strengthening the understanding, but no further; this pursuit, however, he afterwards relinquished, convinced, as he said, that it was of doubtful utility, tending neither to make men better nor happier, but rather the reverse. His opinions, both of many of our own and of the ancient writers, were formed at an early period; admiring more especially those which imparted the greatest know-

ledge of human nature, of the springs of human motives and human actions, and an acquaintance with human manners; and on this principle used not only to observe, "that a good novel was a good book," but frequently to amuse the social fire-side, particularly the ladies, by perusing a few of the most celebrated; adopting fully the sentiment of Pope, that man is the proper study of man.

Bacon's essays he read diligently, and always characterized them as the greatest works of that great man. Shakspeare, Addison, Le Sage, Fielding, and Smollett, then a new writer, were his constant companions in every interval from graver studies; Richardson, contrary to the opinion of Johnson, he thought much inferior to Fielding as a describer of human nature. Demosthenes was his favourite orator; Plutarch's writings he professed, in a letter to a friend at this time, to admire beyond those of any other; he preferred Euripides to Sophocles among the dramatists; and the Greek historians generally to the Latin. Of Horace, Lucretius, and Virgil, he was particularly fond; maintaining the superiority of the Æneid as a poem over the Iliad, while he admitted the general excellence of Homer's genius in invention, force, and sublimity, over that of Virgil.

In this estimate of the two poems, in which few critics agree with him, something may be owing to a keen relish for the superior taste and elegance of the Roman poet; something to the greater prevalence of the Latin language in Ireland (as in Scotland) than the Greek; something to the general

enthusiasm felt there almost universally for Virgil in particular; and something perhaps to the critic's early attempts to give detached portions of this favourite writer an English poetical dress.

Though accused, by that party animosity which ever clings to a great English statesmen as if it were a condition of his existence, of innumerable other offences, Mr. Burke has scarcely ever been suspected of the sin of poetry. For while some have expressed surprise that a man of such brilliant and seemingly kindred genius, should not have made the attempt, others did not hesitate to assert that he was unequal to it; and several of his acquaintance, and even biographers, believed and have stated that he never wrote a line in his life. Even Cumberland, who had known him since 1760, in his own memoirs, written so recently as 1805, assigns Mr. Burke's unacquaintance with the practice of writing poetry, as the reason why, in the general endeavour by the club at St. James's coffee-house, in 1774, to make jocular epitaphs upon Goldsmith, he did not take up his pen.

The following therefore may be esteemed a curiosity; it is a translation by Mr. Burke, while at college in 1746, of the conclusion of the second Georgic of Virgil, the panegyric on a country life; and as the production of a youth just turned of 16, is not merely no ordinary effort, but in many passages may contest the palm with Dryden; in fact, a comparison of the whole will tell little, if any thing, to his disadvantage.

Oh! happy swains! did they know how to prize
The many blessings rural life supplies;
Where in safe huts from clattering arms afar,
The pomp of cities and the din of war,
Indulgent earth, to pay his labouring hand,
Pours in his arms the blessings of the land;
Calm through the valleys flows along his life,
He knows no danger, as he knows no strife.
What! though no marble portals, rooms of state,
Vomit the cringing torrent from his gate,
Though no proud purple hang his stately halls,
Nor lives the breathing brass along his walls,
Though the sheep clothe him without colours' aid,
Nor seeks he foreign luxury from trade,
Yet peace and honesty adorn his days
With rural riches and a life of ease.
Joyous the yell'wing fields here Ceres sees,
Here blushing clusters bend the groaning trees,
Here spreads the silver lake, and all around
Perpetual green, and flow'rs adorn the ground.
How happy too, the peaceful rustic lies,
The grass his bed, his canopy the skies;
From heat retiring to the noon-tide glade,
His trees protect him with an ample shade;
No jarring sounds invade his settling breast,
His lowing cows shall lull him into rest.
Here 'mong the caves, the woods, and rocks around,
Here, only here, the hardy youth abound;
Religion here has fixed her pure abodes,
Parents are honoured, and adored the gods;
Departing justice, when she fled mankind,
In these blest plains her footsteps left behind.
Celestial Nine! my only joy and care,
Whose love inflames me, and whose rites I bear,
Lead me, oh lead me! from the vulgar throng,
Clothe nature's myst'ries in thy rapturous song;
What various forms in heav'ns broad belt appear,
Whose limits bound the circle of the year,
Or spread around in glitt'ring order lie,
Or roll in mystic numbers through the sky?

What dims the midnight lustre of the moon?
What cause obstructs the sun's bright rays at noon?
Why haste his fiery steeds so long to lave
Their splendid chariot in the wintry wave?
Or why bring on the lazy moon so slow?
What love detains them in the realms below?
But if this dull, this feeble breast of mine,
Can't reach such heights, or hold such truths divine,
Oh! may I seek the rural shades alone,
Of half mankind unknowing and unknown,
Range by the borders of the silver flood,
And waste a life ingloriously good.
Hail! blooming fields, where joy unclouded reigns,
Where silver Sperchius laves the yell'wing plains.
Oh! where, Taygeta, shall I hear around
Lyæus praise the Spartan virgins sound?
What god will bear me from this burning heat,
In Hæmus' valley, to some cool retreat,
Where oaks and laurels guard the sacred ground,
And with their ample foliage shade me round?
Happy the man, who versed in Nature's laws,
From known effects can trace the hidden cause!
Him not the terrors of the vulgar fright
The vagrant forms and terrors of the night;
Black and relentless fate he tramples on,
And all the rout of greedy Acheron.
Happy whose life the rural god approves,
The guardian of his growing flocks and groves;
Harmonious Pan and old Sylvanus join
The sister nymphs, to make his joys divine;
Him not the splendours of a crown can please,
Or consul's honours bribe to quit his ease.
Though on his will should crowding armies wait,
And suppliant kings come suing to his gate;
No piteous objects here his peace molest,
Nor can he sorrow while another's blest;
His food alone what bounteous nature yields,
From bending orchards and luxuriant fields,
Pleased he accepts, nor seeks the mad resort
Of thronging clients and litigious court.

Let one delight all danger's forms to brave,
Rush on the sword, or plunge amid the wave,
Destroy all nations with an easy mind,
And make a general havoc of his kind,
That on a Tyrian couch he may recline,
And from a costlier goblet quaff his wine;
Another soul is buried with his store,
Hourly he heaps, and hourly longs for more;
Some in the rostrum fix their sole delight,
Some in the applauses of a rich third night;
While gain smiles lovely in another's eyes,
Though brother's blood should buy the horrid prize;
Though from his country guilt should make him run,
Where other nations feel another sun.

The happy rustic turns the fruitful soil,
And hence proceeds the year's revolving toil;
On this his country for support depends,
On this his cattle, family, and friends;
For this the bounteous gods reward his care,
With all the product of the various year;
His youngling flocks now whiten all the plain,
Now sink the furrows with the teeming grain;
Beauteous to these Pomona adds her charms,
And pours her fragrant treasures in his arms,
From loaden boughs, the orchard's rich produce,
The mellow apple, and the generous juice.

Now winter's frozen hand benumbs the plain,
The winter too has blessings for the swain;
His grunting herd is fed without his toil,
His groaning presses overflow with oil;
The languid autumn crown'd with yellow leaves,
With bleeding fruit and golden-bearded sheaves,
Her various products scatters o'er the land,
And rears the horn of Plenty in her hand.

Nor less than these, wait his domestic life,
His darling children, and his virtuous wife,
The day's long absence they together mourn,
Hang on his neck, and welcome his return;
The cows, departing from the joyful field,
Before his door their milky tribute yield,

While on the green, the frisky kids engage,
With adverse horns and counterfeited rage.
He too, when mark'd with white the festal day,
Devotes his hours to rural sport and play;
Stretch'd on the green amid the jovial quire,
Of boon companions that surround the fire,
With front enlarged he crowns the flowing bowl,
And calls thee, Bacchus, to inspire his soul;
Now warm'd with wine, to vigorous sports they rise;
High on an elm is hung the victor's prize;
To him 'tis given, whose force with greatest speed
Can wing the dart, or urge the fiery steed.
Such manners made the ancient Sabines bold,
Such the life led by Romulus of old;
By arts like these divine Etruria grows,
From such foundations mighty Rome arose,
Whose god-like fame the world's vast circuit fills,
Who with one wall hath circled seven vast hills;
Such was, ere Jove began his iron reign,
Ere mankind feasted upon oxen slain,
The life that Saturn and his subjects led,
Ere from the land offended justice fled;
As yet the brazen use of arms unknown,
And anvils rung with scithes and shares alone.

In addition to this and the version of the Idyllium of Theocritus already mentioned, Mr. Burke made not only other translations, but wrote original pieces, some of them of length. A few of the shorter ones were submitted to the inspection of Mr. Shackleton, or directly addressed to him on temporary circumstances; several of them reported to be juvenile enough; others to display talent, and an ardent love of virtue; but the major part believed to be now irrecoverably lost. Conjointly, they wrote a poem, taking Ballitore for the subject. The address before noticed, to the river Blackwater, which was considered to possess superior merit, was, with several letters written by Mr. Burke during the early part

of his career in London, borrowed by his father from Mr. Shackleton, and never returned.

One other memorial of him, however, is preserved in the following lines, owing probably to the kind care of the gentleman to whom they were addressed; and they will be read with interest as the production of a pen so universally celebrated for its powers in prose.

To Richard Shackleton, on his Marriage.

Written by Mr. Burke, 1748.

When hearts are barter'd for less precious gold,
And like the heart, the venal song is sold;
Each flame is dull, and but one base desire
Kindles the bridal torch and poet's fire;
The gods their violated rites forbear,
The Muse flies far, and Hymen is not there.
But when true love binds in his roseate bands
That rare but happy union, hearts and hands—
When nought but friendship guides the poet's song,
How sweet the verse! the happy love how strong!
Oh! if the Muse, indulging my design,
Should favour me, as love has favour'd thine,
I'd challenge Pan at peril of my life,
Though his Arcadia were to judge the strife.
Why don't the vocal groves ring forth their joy
And lab'ring echoes all their mouths employ?
To tell his bride, what sighs, what plaints they heard,
While yet his growing flame's success he fear'd,
And all his pains o'erpaid with transport now,
When love exults and he enjoys his vow?
Silent ye stand—nor will bestow one lay
Of all he taught to grace this happy day;
Can joy ne'er harbour in your sullen shade,
Or are ye but for lover's sorrows made?
I'll leave you then, and from the Bride's bright eye,
A happier omen take which cannot lie,
Of growing time, still growing in delight,
Of rounds of future years all mark'd with white,

Through whose bright circles, free from envious chance,
Concord and love shall lead an endless dance.
What is the monarch's crown, the shepherd's ease,
The hero's laurel, and the poet's bays?
A load of toilsome life too dull to bear,
If heav'n's indulgence did not add the fair,
E'en Eden's sweets our Adam did despise,
All its gay scenes could not delight his eyes,
Woman God gave, and then 'twas Paradise.
Another Eve and Paradise are thine,
May'st thou be father of as long a line!
Your heart so fix'd on her, and hers on you,
As if the world afforded but the two,
That to this age your constancy may prove,
There yet remains on earth a power call'd love.
These to my friend, in lays not vainly loud,
The palm, unknowing to the giddy crowd
I sung, for these demand his steady truth,
And friendship growing from our earliest youth;
A nobler lay unto his sire should grow,
To whose kind care my better birth I owe,
Who to fair science did my youth entice,
Won from the paths of ignorance and vice.

Things of this description are not constructed to withstand the wintry winds of rigid criticism, yet it is one of the best of the kind; the thoughts chiefly original, the versification harmonious, the expression only in a few places faulty, and the allusions, as has been remarked of his speeches, and even colloquial pleasantries, classical.

He was not only a writer of poetry, but a diligent student of the best English poets, particularly Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, and Young; shewing the most decided attachment to those passages in them distinguished for grandeur, sublimity, and vigour of imagination. The descriptive truth and

solemn seriousness of Young impressed him so forcibly that at one time, it is said, he could repeat much of the Night Thoughts by rote; and in a copy of the work which often formed a travelling companion in his youthful days, the following lines, stated to be in his hand-writing, have been mentioned as written on one of the fly-leaves:—

> Jove claim'd the verse old Homer sung,
> But God himself inspired Young.

Milton, however, was a still greater favourite, chiefly in consequence of his daring flights and sublime conceptions on the most awful of all subjects, so much above the track, and perhaps the powers, of any other poet. He always recommended the study of him to his son, and to all his younger friends, as exhibiting the highest possible range of mind in the English language; and to the last, quoted him frequently both in conversation and in writing. It is, therefore, with some truth that the Rev. Mr. Todd in his life of Milton (p. clv.) makes the following suggestion; while the anecdote by which it is accompanied exhibits Mr. Burke's early attachment to those social literary meetings, of which, in after life, he as well as Dr. Johnson were so fond.

"Burke, I may observe," says Mr. Todd, "was an ardent admirer of Milton. I learn from Mr. Walker (of Dublin) that this great orator was a distinguished member of a literary club instituted in Dublin in 1747, in which he sometimes held the Secretary's pen, and sometimes filled the President's chair; and that in the original minutes of this society, his early Miltonick taste is thus recorded—

(Friday, June 5, 1747, Mr. Burke being ordered to speak the speech of Moloch, *receives applause for the delivery, it being in character.* Then the speech was read and criticised upon; its many beauties illustrated; the chief judged to be its conformity with the character of Moloch—

> No let us rather choose,
> Arm'd with hell-flames and fury, all at once,
> O'er Heav'n's high towers to force resistless sway.

The words 'all at once' (the metre not considered) seemed to the whole assembly to hurt the sentence by stopping the rapidity and checking the fierceness of it; making it too long and tedious. Then was Belial's speech read to the great delight of the hearers; whose opinion was, that Homer only can be compared to Milton, not only for the beauties that shine in every verse, but likewise for the just and lively colours in which each character was drawn; for that none but Homer, like him, ever supported such spirit and exactness in the speeches of such a contrast and variety of persons.)—These notices, adds the learned writer, will not seem tedious; for they suggest an opinion that the finest oratory of modern times might owe its origin and perfection to the poetry of Milton."

That acquaintance with history which distinguished his future life, and which there is no doubt tended to the development of much of his political wisdom, was probably fostered by attendance on this society, and on occasional meetings of the incipient Historical Society; an association of the students of Trinity college much celebrated in Ire-

land, and where some of her greatest men first gave promise of their future fame. It was formally established and countenanced by authority, says the eminent Dr. Elrington, in a communication with which the writer has been favoured, in 1770, suppressed and again resumed in 1794, and finally put down by the heads of the college in 1815; being supposed to direct the attention of youth more than was desirable toward political subjects.

That these meetings had a powerful influence upon young Burke, his friends generally believe. His first efforts as a politician, adds the highest college authority, were made in 1749, previous to his quitting the university, in some letters against Mr. Henry Brooke, the celebrated author of the tragedy of "Gustavus Vasa," the "Fool of Quality," and other popular works, who then stood high in estimation with the patriots, in consequence of the representation of his tragedy having been interdicted by government for the alleged boldness of its sentiments. This gentleman, who had been also educated at Trinity College and entered of the Middle Temple, he ridiculed for his patriotic pretensions under the name, as it is said, of *Diabetes*—in allusion perhaps to the fluency with which his writings were said to be composed.

Another subject for the exertion of his sarcastic wit about the same period, was Dr. Charles Lucas, a celebrated character of the Irish metropolis, who from apothecary and then physician became a patriot; thence, by the folly of those in power sanctioned by a vote of the Irish parliament, elevated into a popular idol and a martyr in consequence of

being outlawed by that vote; who afterwards on his return became member for the city of Dublin, whose statue now stands on the staircase of the Royal Exchange there; and whose remains received the unusual honour of being attended to the grave by the whole corporation; while his widow, in consideration of the services and sufferings of her husband, received from the same body a pension for her life. At the period in question, the persecution of the Castle, as the seat of government is there termed, had sharpened his zeal into some degree of intemperance in his conduct and writings, when Mr. Burke assailed him sarcastically as *Epaminondas;* and by pushing his political doctrines to their ultimate results, as he afterwards did a different set of opinions by Lord Bolingbroke, aimed at throwing over them an air of absurdity. What were the effects of Mr. Burke's pen in these early political exercises, cannot now with certainty be known; but judging from his private letters written about this time, their vigour was not much inferior to that of any future period of his life.

His destination, from an early period, was for the bar; then the usual resort, either as a profession or as forming a more easy introduction to the House of Commons, of the young men of Ireland distinguished for talents and ambition. Some of his relations say that he was intended from the first for the English bar, and there is some ground for the belief in the early period at which his name was enrolled at the Middle Temple. The following is the entry.

23 Aprilis, 1747.

M^a^. Edmundus Burke, filius secundus Ricardi Burke de civitate Dublin. Unius Attornatorum curiæ Scaccariæ Domini Regis in Regno Hiberniæ, admissus est in societatem Medii Templi, London.

Et dat pro fine £4. 0*s.* 0*d.*

Early in 1750, not in 1753 as commonly stated, he arrived in London to keep the customary terms previous to being called to the bar. His name appears again in the books of the society as entering into bond, May 2, 1750; his sureties being John Burke, Serjeant's-inn, Fleet-street, Gent. and Thomas Kelly, of the Middle Temple, Gent.

His arrival, however, preceded this period by several months. The first letter to his friend Shackleton bears date the 20th of February, and mentions the introduction of the bill by the Earl of Chesterfield for that alteration in the calendar, which soon afterwards took place.

It may be remarked here, that a long copy of verses on Mrs. Cibber, the celebrated actress, contained in the Annual Register for 1768, are supposed to have been written by Mr. Burke previous to his quitting Dublin; it is possible they may be by his brother Richard; and the least doubt upon the point is sufficient for not giving them insertion here.

CHAPTER II.

First Impressions of London and England generally.—Contemplates an Attempt for the Logic Professorship of Glasgow.—Report about St. Omer.—Letter to his Father.—Idea of a perfect Wife.—Dr. Brocklesby's Compliment to Mrs. Burke.—First avowed Publications of Mr. Burke.

His first impressions on viewing the English metropolis are vividly expressed in a letter to his schoolfellow already mentioned, Mr. Matthew Smith; and the allusions to Westminster Abbey and the House of Commons, "the chosen temples of fame," as he said on another occasion, will be esteemed by those who look to auguries sufficiently remarkable; the whole is in a peculiar degree expressive of *character*, the reflections ingenious, and just, and even profound, like most of his letters written afterwards, which, though really despatched off-hand, were by many believed to be studied compositions.

"You'll expect some short account of my journey to this great city. To tell you the truth, I made very few remarks as I rolled along, for my mind was occupied with many thoughts, and my eyes often filled with tears, when I reflected on all the dear friends I left behind; yet the prospects could not fail to attract the attention of the most indifferent: country seats sprinkled round on every side, some in the modern taste, some in the style of old De Coverley Hall, all smiling on the neat but hum-

ble cottage; every village as neat and compact as a bee-hive, resounding with the busy hum of industry; and inns like palaces.

"What a contrast to our poor country, where you'll scarce find a cottage ornamented with a chimney! But what pleased me most of all was the progress of agriculture, my favourite study, and my favourite pursuit, if Providence had blessed me with a few paternal acres.*

"A description of London and its natives would fill a volume. The buildings are very fine: it may be called the sink of vice: but its hospitals and charitable institutions, whose turrets pierce the skies like so many electrical conductors, avert the wrath of Heaven. The inhabitants may be divided into two classes, the *undoers* and the *undone;* generally so, I say, for I am persuaded there are many men of honesty, and women of virtue, in every street. An Englishman is cold and distant at first; he is very cautious even in forming an acquaintance; he must know you well before he enters into friendship with you; but if he does, he is not the first to dissolve that sacred bond: in short, a real Englishman is one that performs more than he promises: in company he is rather silent, extremely prudent in his expressions, even in politics, his favourite topic. The women are not quite so reserved; they consult their glasses to the best advantage; and as nature is very liberal in her gifts to their persons, and even mind, it is not easy for a young man to escape their

* At this period his elder brother being alive was of course in succession to the paternal property.

glances, or to shut his ears to their softly-flowing accents.

"As to the state of learning in this city, you know I have not been long enough in it to form a proper judgment of that subject. I don't think, however, there is as much respect paid to a man of letters on this side the water as you imagine. I don't find that genius, the 'rath primrose, which forsaken dies,' is patronized by any of the nobility, so that writers of the first talents are left to the capricious patronage of the public. Notwithstanding discouragement, literature is cultivated in a high degree. Poetry raises her enchanting voice to heaven. History arrests the wings of Time in his flight to the gulf of oblivion. Philosophy, the queen of arts, and the daughter of heaven, is daily extending her intellectual empire. Fancy sports on airy wing like a meteor on the bosom of a summer cloud; and even Metaphysics spins her cobwebs, and catches some flies.

"The House of Commons not unfrequently exhibits explosions of eloquence that rise superior to those of Greece and Rome, even in their proudest days. Yet, after all, a man will make more by the figures of arithmetic than the figures of rhetoric, unless he can get into the trade wind, and then he may sail secure over Pactolean sands. As to the stage, it is sunk, in my opinion, into the lowest degree; I mean with regard to the trash that is exhibited on it; but I don't attribute this to the taste of the audience, for when Shakspeare warbles his 'native wood-notes,' the boxes, pit, and gallery, are crowded—and the gods are true to every word, if properly winged to the heart.

"Soon after my arrival in town I visited Westminster Abbey: the moment I entered I felt a kind of awe pervade my mind which I cannot describe; the very silence seemed sacred. Henry the Seventh's Chapel is a very fine piece of Gothic architecture, particularly the roof; but I am told that it is exceeded by a chapel in the University of Cambridge. Mrs. Nightingale's monument has not been praised beyond its merit. The attitude and expression of the husband in endeavouring to shield his wife from the dart of death, is natural and affecting. But I always thought that the image of death would be much better represented with an extinguished torch inverted, than with a dart. Some would imagine, that all these monuments were so many monuments of folly;—I don't think so; what useful lessons of morality and sound philosophy do they not exhibit! When the high-born beauty surveys her face in the polished parian, though dumb the marble, yet it tells her that it was placed to guard the remains of as fine a form, and as fair a face, as her own. They show besides how anxious we are to extend our loves and friendships beyond the grave, and to snatch as much as we can from oblivion—such is our natural love of immortality: but it is here that letters obtain the noblest triumphs; it is here that the swarthy daughters of Cadmus may hang their trophies on high; for when all the pride of the chisel and the pomp of heraldry yield to the silent touches of time, a single line, a half-worn-out inscription, remain faithful to their trust. Blest be the man that first introduced these strangers into our islands, and may they never want protection or

merit! I have not the least doubt that the finest poem in the English language, I mean Milton's Il Penseroso, was composed in the long-resounding aisle of a mouldering cloister or ivy'd abbey. Yet after all, do you know that I would rather sleep in the southern corner of a little country church-yard, than in the tomb of the Capulets. I should like, however, that my dust should mingle with kindred dust. The good old expression 'family burying-ground' has something pleasing in it, at least to me."

During the first few years of his stay in London, the vacations were devoted to an examination of the interior of the country, and sometimes crossing to Ireland, where, in 1751, as already mentioned, he took his master's degree, and is believed to have made some stay in Cork. Health, as much as curiosity, formed the inducement to these excursions; the former continued delicate and ill adapted to severe study, though this does not seem to have relaxed his diligence in any degree towards general literature; and that the remedial means he adopted did not wholly fail of effect, we have his own testimony.

Writing to Mr. Shackleton, April 5, 1751, he says, "my health is tolerable, my studies too in the same degree." In another letter of the same year, dated 31st August, from Monmouth, which had then some reputation as a resort for invalids, and whither he had proceeded from Bristol, he alludes playfully to his more juvenile writings, and hopes his present exercises (alluding to the law) may be attended with better success than his literary

studies, on the ground that "though a middling poet cannot be endured, there is some quarter for a middling lawyer."

To the same correspondent, September 28, 1752, dated from the house of a Mr. Druce, at Torlin, near Bradford in Wiltshire, a few miles from Bath, where, in company with a friend, he made some stay, enjoying the amusements of the country, he describes how the preceding part of the year had been employed. "Since I had your letter I have often shifted the scene. I spent part of the winter, that is, term-time, in London, and part in Croydon in Surry; about the beginning of summer finding myself attacked with my old complaint (an affection of the chest), I went once more to Bristol, and found the same benefit; I thank God for it."

Whether he found the law, as a profession, alien to his habits, his health incompetent to its persevering pursuit, or became weaned from it by that attachment to general literature, which has in so many other instances of men of genius proved irresistible, it is certain that his views soon changed; for at the expiration of the usual time he was not called to the bar. Among his brother templers were a few old college associates, who seemed to have come to the same determination; for they were afterwards more known in politics and letters than in law.

In London also he met with many other old friends and college acquaintance, some of whose letters, alluding to him as a very "promising young man," "a remarkably clever young man," "one who possessed very superior genius and information,"

were extant very recently in more than one family in Ireland. With Dr. Brocklesby, then pushing his way as physician, and who soon afterwards received an appointment in the medical department of the army, he renewed his acquaintance; and with Dr. Joseph Fenn Sleigh, already mentioned, who was finishing his studies, commenced it: both were Quakers, and both afterwards quitted that persuasion. It was about this period that the late Arthur Murphy, then carrying on the Gray's Inn Journal, hearing the acquirements of his young countryman, Mr. Burke, loudly praised by some mutual friends, gained an introduction to him at the chambers of Mr. Kelly, whose name appears as one of his sureties in the Temple books, and on the first interview assented to the general opinion of his being a superior young man; an impression which every succeeding meeting served to increase. The diversity of his knowledge, and the force and originality of his observations, were striking; in history, politics, polite letters, and philosophy, there seemed little with which he was not familiar; and his attachment to the latter, "queen of arts, and daughter of heaven," as he had called her in the letter to Mr. Smith, was so strong, that it is not surprising he should wish to unite his interest with his taste, in the idea entertained about this time of getting elected to the professorship of logic, then vacant in the university of Glasgow.

A principal inducement to this step was probably the recollection that Ireland had more than once supplied the Scottish seats of learning with eminent men. Her last and greatest present to the university

in question was, in the language of the first philosopher of Scotland,* "the profound and eloquent" Dr. Francis Hutcheson.

Born in the north of Ireland, educated at Glasgow, and settling afterwards in Dublin, he soon became distinguished by his writings as one of the first philosophers of the age; and though a dissenter at a time when dissenters were looked upon with an evil eye, enjoyed the friendship and protection of Primate Boulter, Archbishop King, Bishop Synge, Lords Molesworth, Granville, and others, the most eminent in that country for virtue and talents. His fame at length drew an invitation to the university of Glasgow in 1729, first to the Logic, and then to the Moral Philosophy Chair; an event of great moment both in the intellectual and literary history of Scotland. His celebrity attracted a very large class from all parts of the country. He was the immediate precursor of Adam Smith, Reid, Beattie, Ferguson, and others; the instructor of some of them, and, from his celebrity, a source of interest and emulation to all; while the ingenuity and eloquence of his lectures, says the distinguished philosopher already quoted, "contributed very powerfully to diffuse in Scotland that taste for analytical discussion and that spirit of liberal inquiry, to which the world is indebted for some of the most valuable productions of the eighteenth century;" and again, "Dr. Hutcheson, of Glasgow, by his excellent writings, and still more by his eloquent lectures, had diffused among a numerous race of pupils a liberality of sentiment and

* Mr. Dugald Stewart.

a refinement of taste, unknown before in this part of the island."

Upon this eminent man, whose "Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue," is believed to have suggested the title, at least, of the "Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful," our young adventurer had his eye, in aiming at running, perhaps a similar career of philosophical fame.

Scotsmen, he understood, were no less fond of abstractions and subtilities in the schools, than they are of the more substantial and tangible realities of active life; and to suit their taste in the former respect, he laid in, in addition to an unusually ample stock of general knowledge, a large adventure in metaphysics,—no less than a refutation of the systems of his own countryman the celebrated Berkeley, and of Hume. There is also no reason whatever to doubt, and his own words are decisive of the fact, that he had even at this time sketched the outline of the essay on the Sublime and Beautiful, as an additional claim to the vacant chair. This honour, however, he failed to obtain; under what particular circumstances is not now known. It is certain that he never proceeded to an active canvass or public competition; but being in that quarter of the island, and probably hearing that the office was to be awarded to the successful competitor in a public trial of skill, he took the resolution of contesting the palm with the Scottish literati, until informed that certain private arrangements in the university and city, rendered any such attempt totally hopeless. The inquiry made of Principal Taylor, by a friend of the writer, is satis-

factory as to Mr. Burke having been a candidate, but not as to the exact date. His successful competitor was Mr. James Clow.*

He returned with undiminished spirit to his studies, and to what continued a favourite enjoyment with him through life, occasional excursions through the country. Having extended his journey to France, it was believed by many who knew the

* Since the above was written, the writer has been favoured with the following communication from Mr. Dugald Stewart.—

"I am very doubtful of the fact that ever Burke was a candidate for a professorship in Glasgow. I remember perfectly a conversation with Mr. (Adam) Smith on the subject, in the course of which he said that the story was extremely current, but he knew of no evidence upon which it rested; and he suspected it took its rise entirely from an opinion which he had expressed at Glasgow upon the publication of Burke's book on the Sublime and Beautiful, that the author of that book would be a great acquisition to the college, if he would accept of a chair."

This opinion, though entitled to every respect, is not decisive. The evidence is rather the other way; for the story is not only old, but was repeated three or four times in print during Mr. Burke's life-time, and on one occasion came immediately under his eye without receiving any formal contradiction from him, which, as it did not come under the head of *slander*, he might have deigned to give it. The name of his more successful opponent also is expressly mentioned. The letter from Glasgow alluded to above, bearing upon the point of his being a candidate, is as follows:

"Glasgow, January 29th, 1823.

"My dear Sir,

"I have made inquiry at Principal Taylor in order to learn whether Mr. Edmund Burke was actually a Professor of Logic in the college of Glasgow between the years 1749 and 1752, or was an unsuccessful candidate for the chair.—The Principal states that Mr. Burke was a candidate for that chair in 1752 or 1753, but that he was *unsuccessful*."

falsehood of the report of his having been educated at St. Omer, that he had simply visited that town, and that having described its institutions in company, the report originated of his having been brought up there. But even this is not the fact. He observed at his own table more than once, "He could not but consider it a remarkable circumstance (in allusion to this report) that in three or four journeys he had made in France, St. Omer's happened to be the chief place in the northern provinces which he had *never* visited previous to the year 1775, and this not from design, but accident; for being continually spoken of in Ireland as a place of education, it was no more than natural that a traveller from that country should wish to see it in the indulgence of rational curiosity."

Mr. Wilkes used pleasantly to say that this rumour reminded him of the story of the *three black crows*, and gave the following account of the origin of it. "In reply to an argument used by Burke in the House, Sir," said he, "somebody said it was only fit for a Jesuit to urge. It was clear from his accent, and name, and connexions, that he was an Irishman: an Irishman, and a papist, in the opinions of some of our honest country gentlemen, were synonimous: St. Omer contained a Jesuit seminary: at this Jesuit seminary many Irish priests were educated:—ergo, it was a clear case among the wise men of Gotham, that Burke must be a Jesuit, and must have been educated at St. Omer."

From the indistinct notices which can now be collected, it is said, that his curiosity was very active; the ideal and the simply beautiful being min-

gled with the useful; and pictures and statues, a farm-yard, a mine, or a manufactory, were equally subjects for investigation. His more sedentary pursuits were followed with a degree of assiduity, which vivacious men commonly term *plodding;* but which more sober judgments know to be a good substitute for all other talents, and in fact the only surety for their excellence. His application was unwearied. Unlike most persons of vivid fancy, he had good sense enough to recollect, that the most brilliant imaginations ought not only to have wings to fly, but also legs to stand upon; in other words, that genius, unpropped by knowledge, may serve to amuse, but will rarely be useful in the more important concerns of mankind.

The desire to acquire and the drudgery of acquiring, were promoted by habits of life, which concurring testimony, collected about twenty years afterwards from several of his acquaintance, went to prove were more than commonly equable and temperate. Moderation in the pleasurable enjoyments of youth seemed so much a gift from nature, that, at a period of life when the passions too often run riot, he either had few vicious and irregular propensities, or possessed the next best gift of providence,—the power to control them. His excesses were not in dissipation, but in study. He gave way to no licentious inclinations. It is asserted that he did not then know a single game at cards; and that wine was no further a favourite than as it contributed to social intercourse, of which he was at every period of life, particularly with literary and scientific men, extremely fond, so far as the pleasures of conviviality

could be enjoyed without its excesses. One of his chief resorts was the Grecian coffee-house, where his habits for a long time were well remembered, and his conversation quoted many years subsequently by members of the Middle Temple Society.

He who devotes his days to the treasuring up of knowledge, may be permitted to set apart the evenings to recreation. While in Dublin he had become attached to the drama from its intimate relation to literature, to poetry, and perhaps more than either, to the displays it exemplifies of human nature: in a vast metropolis like London, indeed, the theatre is almost the natural resort of a literary man; for there, even when most in search of relaxation, he may find some, and not unprofitable, employment for the mind.

The acquaintance of Mr. Murphy, who had by this time attempted the stage as a profession, of many of the leading theatrical critics who frequented the Grecian, and of several brother templers equally fond of dramatic amusements, introduced him to some of the principal performers: To Garrick, from whom he confessed to have profited in oratorical action, and in the management of his voice, at whose table he saw many of the most distinguished characters of the age, and where his talents and powers of conversation became more generally known: To Macklin, at whose debating society, which flourished for a few months in 1754, he is believed to have made his first attempt at public speaking, and whom it is said he recommended soon after to Mr. Wedderburn, then coming forward at the bar, in order to get rid of his Scottish accent:

and to the celebrated Mrs. (or Miss) Woffington, with whom it has been insinuated, though without any probable foundation, that a still more intimate connexion existed.

This lady, so well known in the annals of the theatre, was famed for possessing beauty, wit, vivacity, fascination of manners, and very considerable powers of mind, which, when performing in Dublin, caused her to be admitted (the only one of her sex who was so) a member of a famous association of noblemen and gentlemen there, called the Beefsteak Club; she possessed almost every thing but that which alone can make a woman respectable,—virtue. Men of the highest rank, of learning, of wealth, of wit, and even of morals, sought her society; at her house he extended his acquaintance, and, among others, is said to have been introduced and recommended by her to the Duke of Newcastle, then prime minister; an assertion probably not correct, as his grace, ten years afterwards, had nearly proved a very serious enemy, either from forgetting the recommendation, or suspecting that because it was not attended to, the pen of Mr. Burke had been employed against his vacillating and divided administration between the years 1754 and 1757.

It was about this time that Mr. Burke first entertained the idea of trying his fortune in the American colonies, a purpose which he did not wholly relinquish for more than two years afterward, as will be seen in a subsequent page; but at this moment finding his father to be strongly averse to the design, he surrendered his own decided conviction of its utility to a sense of filial duty, expressed in the following excellent and affectionate letter.

"HONOURED SIR,

"I had a letter by the last post from Mr. Nagle,* in which he tells me that he gave you my letter, and informs me at the same time of the reception which the proposal it contained met with from you and the family. I am, I own, surprised, and very much concerned that this proposal should prove any cause either of grief or anger to you; certain I am that nothing ever was further from my inclination than the least intention of making it so.

"When I informed you of my design, it was not to declare any determined resolution which I had taken, but to desire your opinion on an affair which I believed it adviseable for me to engage in. This affair seemed to me neither to be wrong in itself, nor unattended with a reasonable prospect of success. I proposed it to you, as I must and ought to propose to you any thing I think to my advantage, with a view of having your advice upon every material step I should take in it. This is what in prudence I ought to have done, and what every motive of duty and gratitude ought to have obliged me to do. I have nothing nearer my heart than to make you easy; and I have no scheme or design, however reasonable it may seem to me, that I would not gladly sacrifice to your quiet and submit to your judgment. You have surely had trouble enough with a severe disorder, without any addition from uneasiness at my conduct."

* His uncle—brother to his mother, to whom, as it will be seen, he afterwards addressed many letters.

(*Here, this letter, written on a sheet of foolscap, becomes unintelligible from part being torn away; but by the few words which remain, it may be inferred that a place of trust and credit in one of the provinces* (*of America*) *was vacant, which he had been offered; and having consulted some persons upon the propriety of accepting it,* "*they all to a man highly approved of it.*" *The conclusion of the letter remains entire.*)

" I shall therefore follow your wishes, not with reluctance but with pleasure; and really nothing has this long time chagrined me so much, as to find that the proposal of this matter has been disagreeable to you: I ought to have a satisfaction in desiring your judgment in whatever appeared to my advantage, as this strongly did. I shall be ready to yield to it always; and to go to Ireland when you think proper, and the end, for which you desire I should go, can be answered.

" I feel to the bottom of my soul for all you have this long time suffered from your disorder, and it grieves me deeply to think that at such a time your sufferings should be at all increased by any thing which looks ill-judged in my conduct. May God make them lighter every moment, and continue to you and my mother very many very happy years, and every blessing I ought to wish you for your care, your tenderness, and your indulgence to me. I am in some trouble and anxiety about this matter; but in real truth, in all my designs I shall have nothing more at heart than to show myself to you and my mother a dutiful, affectionate, and obliged son.

" EDMUND BURKE.

" London, March 11, 1755."

The ambition of being distinguished in literature seems to have been one of his earliest, as it was one of his latest passions; prompted as much perhaps by that early maturity of mind of which his letters and contemporary testimony furnish evidence, as the natural desire of advancing his fortune and reputation. Frequent intercourse with the literary society of the metropolis would necessarily inspire the wish to test the vigour of his pen by comparing it with that of others through the customary medium of the press; though the state of letters in London, which he alludes to in the communication to Mr. Smith, by observing that much more was to be made by the figures of arithmetic than the figures of rhetoric, does not appear to have inspired any very sanguine expectations of authorship being a source of pecuniary advantage. But the disappointment experienced in the projected transatlantic expedition, in all probability became an additional stimulus to endeavour to distinguish himself in some leading department of life.

The first productions even of great writers are seldom preserved, and are perhaps seldom worth preserving. Those of Mr. Burke do not seem to have escaped the general fate, as there is no doubt that some pieces of his were published previous to those which appear first in his works; little more, however, can be ascertained respecting them now, than what contemporary remembrance, and possibly conjecture, supplied, after his name had become familiar to the public ear.

One of the first was believed by Mr. Murphy to be a poem, or poetical translation from the Latin,

which, from the preceding specimen, is not improbable; but as nothing further is known, its success could not be considerable, and might have induced a distaste in the writer to any future attempt of length in that species of composition. It is certain that soon after his arrival in London he wrote to Ireland for anecdotes to engraft into concise accounts of Mr. Brooke, whom he had assailed as a politician, but whom he found of more importance than he expected, and of his new acquaintance Mrs. Woffington: these, with the poetry in question, may possibly be traced by the more diligent collectors of the pamphlets and periodical publications of the time. The Essay on the Drama, preserved in his works, is believed to be of the same date. So also may be many of the materials collected for a work on the oppressed condition of the catholics of Ireland, which are likewise among his posthumous remains. Politics were probably not neglected; and in criticism, for which his range of information and keenness of remark offered peculiar facilities, he is supposed to have written much.

His first avowed work, the "Vindication of Natural Society," which came out in the Spring of 1756, may in fact be termed a piece of philosophical criticism couched under the guise of serious irony. It was an octavo pamphlet of 106 pages, published by Cooper at the price of 1*s.* 6*d.*; and originated in an opinion generally expressed in literary society, of the style of Lord Bolingbroke being not only the best of that time, but in itself wholly inimitable; and in the approbation expressed by some persons of what were called his philosophical opinions which had been published in March 1754.

The design of Mr. Burke was to produce a covert mimicry both of his style and principles; and particularly, by pushing the latter to their ultimate results, tó force conviction on the mind of the reader of their unsoundness, by showing that the arguments employed by the peer against religion, applied as strongly against every other institution of civilized men. His lordship's philosophy, such as it was, was the newest pattern of the day, and of course excited considerable notice, as coming from a man who had made so conspicuous a figure in politics; and whose career, after a youth spent in the stews, and a manhood in turbulence and disaffection to the government of his country, seemed appropriately terminated by an old age of infidelity. Accustomed to disregard honest and wise opinions on other matters, he wanted courage to show his contempt of them on this; but at his death left to Mallet, a brother infidel, the office of ushering his benevolent legacy of deism into light; which drew from Dr. Johnson, when asked his opinion of it, the exclamation "A scoundrel! who spent his life in charging a popgun against christianity; and a coward! who, afraid of the report of his own gun, left half a crown to a hungry Scotchman to draw the trigger after his death."

The novelty of the plan of attack upon the dialectics of the noble philosopher, caused some stir in the literary circles, though it has been untruly stated by a virulent enemy, in the guise of a biographer, to have fallen still-born from the press. Lord Chesterfield and Bishop Warburton for a short time believed it genuine; Mallet, it has been said, went

to Dodsley's shop when filled with the literati, purposely to disavow it; and the periodical critics, though alive to the deception when their strictures appeared in print, gave it a full examination, and much praise for the ingenuity shown in the execution.

The imitation indeed was so perfect as to constitute identity rather than resemblance. It was not merely the language, style, and general eloquence of the original which had been caught; but the whole mind of the peer, his train of thought, the power to enter into his conceptions, seemed to be transfused into the pen of his imitator with a fidelity and 'grace beyond the reach of art.' Several able critics of the present day have expressed their admiration of it in strong terms; one of them, in a celebrated periodical work, alluding to this power of copying an author in *all* his peculiarities, says—

"In Burke's imitation of Bolingbroke (the most perfect specimen perhaps that ever will exist of the art in question) we have all the qualities which distinguish the style, or we may indeed say the genius of that noble writer, concentrated and brought before us; so that an ordinary reader, who, in perusing his genuine works merely felt himself dazzled and disappointed—delighted and wearied he could not tell why, is now enabled to form a definite and precise conception of the causes of those opposite sensations—and to trace to the nobleness of the diction and the inaccuracy of the reasoning—the boldness of the propositions and the rashness of the inductions—the magnificence of the pretensions and the feebleness of the performance, those contradic-

tory judgments with the confused result of which he had been perplexed in his study of the original."

This tract, which was reprinted in 1765, is perhaps equally remarkable for having anticipated many of the wild notions, under the name of philosophy, broached a few years ago in the general rage to overturn old opinions as well as old institutions. It was amusing to see what were first introduced to the world as specimens of ingenious absurdity, retailed to the ignorant of our own day as the legitimate inductions of philosophy. For in this piece may be found (advanced of course ironically) something of the same cant about the evils of governments, the misdeeds of statesmen, the injustice of aristocratic distinctions, the troubles engendered by religion, the tyranny and uncertainty of laws, the virtues of the poor over the rich, with much more of what the author, when speaking seriously, justly termed abuse of reason. Though gifted with no common degree of foresight, he could have no idea that these phantoms of philosophy, conjured up for his amusement in 1756, should be opposed to him 40 years afterwards as substantial realities; that his whole strength should be required to put down his own shadows.

In one of his later productions, Mr. Burke has characterized him as a shallow writer whom nobody now perused; and the fact is strongly indicative of the fleeting nature of that fame which is not grounded upon a reasonable desire to advance the real wisdom and solid interests of mankind. Mr. Burke used to mention at his table, that the first Lord Littleton told him that Bolingbroke never

committed any of his works to paper himself, but invariably dictated to a secretary, which accounted for the tautology and repetitions so common in his writings. In company, he was fluent and eloquent, speaking, or rather dictating to his hearers, with an air of authority, more resembling the formal harangue of the House of Commons than the usual tone of conversation, and not allowing himself to be interrupted or contradicted.

A few months afterwards, in the same year, appeared "A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful," published for Dodsley, at the price of 3*s*. Of this celebrated work, so long before the public, which now forms a text-book in liberal education, and one of reference in our universities, little more need be said than that it is perfectly original in the execution and design. Longinus indeed had written on the sublime, and Addison partially on grandeur and beauty, but neither of them profoundly nor distinctly; they exemplify and illustrate rather than analyze or dive to the sources of those impressions on the mind; and they even confound the sublime with the beautiful on many occasions. But Mr. Burke's book marks the line between them so distinctly, as that they cannot be mistaken; he investigates the constituents and appearances of each scientifically, and illustrates his views with great happiness. Johnson considered it a model of true philosophical criticism. Blair, who praises its originality and ingenuity, has profited much by it in his remarks on sublimity and beauty, as well as in the theory of that often-discussed quality, taste, which in this work is justly

observed to prevail in our minds "either from a greater degree of natural sensibility, or from a closer and longer attention to the object."

It is well known, that toward the decline of life, Mr. Burke was solicited by several of his intimate friends, particularly Sir Joshua Reynolds and Dr. Lawrence, to revise and enlarge this treatise by the addition of such facts and observations as thirty years must have supplied. The popularity of the work, they said, and the excellence of what was already done, fully deserved that it should be rendered as complete as possible. His reply usually was, that he was no longer fit to pursue speculative matters of that sort; his mind had been occupied so completely by other and more active business, that he could not recur to them with that ease and satisfaction to himself which such investigations required; and besides, several other writers had pursued the track he had chalked out, so that there was little of novelty to add. To Dr. Lawrence, he once said, he was never more fit for abstract speculations than when at college and immediately afterwards—that he had about that time speculated long and deeply—and in proof of the fact said, he had begun the Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful before he was 19 years old, and had kept it by him for seven years before it was published.

As indicative of character, of extensive and various observation, and accurate deduction, both these productions are remarkable, particularly the latter, considering the time of life at which it was written. From the nature of the subject independent of his own testimony, it is evident that it

could not be a work of haste, but of much inquiry, of keen penetration, and of diligent remark, continued for a considerable period of time; and was finished, as we have seen, before he was 26; an age at which indifferent rhymes or loose love-stories form the common exercises of young templers, and when scarcely any man, whatever be his attainments, thinks of starting for one of the highest degrees in philosophy, much less is enabled to make good his claim to the distinction. Both works are evidences of a mind early and deeply reflective, investigating for itself, and coming out of the inquiry, not with a desire to shine in paradox, or to astonish the world by propounding something very new or very adverse to all received opinions, but with the conviction that the general belief of mankind in the main questions that interest them, religion, politics, and philosophy, is right. The simple, unornamented style of the Inquiry, is in good taste as applied to a philosophical subject; and differs in every respect from most of his subsequent oratorical efforts.

Continued application to these pursuits produced a fit of illness—too often the lot of the labourer in literature,—whose existence, though gratifying to the pride of the human mind, from a real or fancied superiority over others, is in practice one of the most irksome. For it admits of little relaxation. It must be pursued chiefly in solitude. Society, which cheers and animates most other men in their calling, becomes an impediment to the more brilliant conceptions of the author. His business is with books; his chosen companions the mute, yet vivacious offspring of the brain. Bound to his desk, either by over-ruling ne-

cessity, or scarcely less forcible inclination, the lighter enjoyments of life cannot be often tasted without interfering with the continuity of his pursuits. Before him lies the stated task—the page not of nature but of the printer—to which he must sometimes unwillingly turn when more attractive objects invite him elsewhere; for the sun may shine, the fields look green, the flowers bloom in vain for him, who in sallying forth to refresh his jaded intellect or exhausted frame, must neglect the occupation which possibly gives him subsistence. Such also is the case now and then with the too diligent student. Cumberland has given a recital of bodily suffering endured in the acquisition of learning; and Burke, had he written his own life, might have told a story still more distressing.

For the re-establishment of his health, Bath and Bristol were again resorted to with success. In the former city resided his countryman Dr. Christopher Nugent, a very amiable man, and an esteemed and able physician, who having some previous acquaintance with Mr. Burke, kindly invited him to his house as better adapted to the wants and situation of an invalid. An attachment to his daughter Miss Jane Mary Nugent was the result; and the guest offered her nearly all he had at this time to offer except what his father supplied, his heart and hand, which were accepted; she was born in the south of Ireland, though educated chiefly in England; her father was a Roman catholic, her mother a rigid presbyterian, who not only stipulated for the free enjoyment of her own religion, but for the privilege of educating her daughters in the same tenets, which

were therefore adopted by Mrs. Burke. It has been asserted, however, either through utter ignorance or the most determined animosity, that she was a catholic, and among a hundred other shameful slanders vented against her husband, by political enemies assuming even to write his life, was one, that he kept a popish priest in the house for her, upon whom he continually exercised his love for deistical raillery. It is difficult to conceive more malicious or more abominable falsehoods, which in this as well as in a hundred other instances, had not even a shadow of foundation; they are an epitome, however, of that "hunt of obloquy," in his own words, "which has ever pursued me with a full cry through life."

This union was to him a source of comfort ever after. Added to affectionate admiration of his talents, she possessed accomplishments, good sense, goodness of heart, and a sweetness of manners and disposition, which served to allay many of the anxieties of his future career,—the labours to attain fame and independence, the fretful moments attendant on severe study, the irritations produced by party and political zeal, and the tempestuous passions engendered by constant contention in active parliamentary life. He repeatedly declared that "every care vanished the moment he entered under his own roof." He wrote the following beautifully descriptive prose paper, *the idea of a perfect wife*, which he presented to her one morning on the anniversary of their marriage, delicately heading the paper thus, "The Character of ———" leaving her to fill up the blank. To his friends also, the earliest as well

as the latest, she was equally a theme of praise. William Burke thus writes of her in March 1766:—"Poor Mrs. Burke has been visited by a most severe cold; the delicacy of her frame, and that infinity of intrinsic worth that makes her dear to us, raised some anxious apprehensions; but, thank God! she is so much better that our fears are no more." Men of genius are seldom so fortunate in their partners, or at least seldom think themselves so; for being by nature an ideal race, they look perhaps for more perfections than commonly fall to the lot of frail humanity, and expecting to meet with angels, are sadly disappointed in finding mere women.

The ideas of the piece alluded to partake of a high order of poetry, but perhaps more fully and distinctly expressed than the restricted nature of rhyme is likely to allow to any other than the effusions of the very first poets.—It is as follows:—

"*The Character of* ———.

"I intend to give my idea of a woman; if it at all answers any original, I shall be pleased; for if such a person as I would describe really exists, she must be far superior to my description: and such as I must love too well to be able to paint as I ought.

"She is handsome, but it is a beauty not arising from features, from complexion, or from shape; she has all three in an high degree, but it is not by these she touches an heart; it is all that sweetness of temper, benevolence, innocence, and sensibility, which a face can express that forms her beauty.

"She has a face that just raises your attention at

first sight, it grows on you every moment, and you wonder it did no more than raise your attention at first.

" Her eyes have a mild light, but they awe you when she pleases; they command like a good man out of office, not by authority but by virtue.

" Her features are not perfectly regular; that sort of exactness is more to be praised than to be loved; for it is never animated.

" Her stature is not tall; she is not made to be the admiration of every body, but the happiness of one.

" She has all the firmness that does not exclude delicacy; she has all the softness that does not imply weakness.

" There is often more of the coquet shown in an affected plainness than in a tawdry finery; she is always clean without preciseness or affectation. Her gravity is a gentle thoughtfulness, that softens the features without discomposing them; she is usually grave.

" Her smiles are inexpressible.

" Her voice is a low, soft music, not formed to rule in public assemblies, but to charm those who can distinguish a company from a crowd; it has this advantage, you must come close to her to hear it.

" To describe her body describes her mind; one is the transcript of the other. Her understanding is not shown in the variety of matters it exerts itself on, but in the goodness of the choice she makes.

" She does not display it so much in saying or do-

ing striking things, as in avoiding such as she ought not to say or do.

" She discovers the right and wrong of things not by reasoning but sagacity: most women, and many good ones, have a closeness and something selfish in their dispositions; she has a true generosity of temper; the most extravagant cannot be more unbounded in their liberality, the most covetous not more cautious in the distribution.

" No person of so few years can know the world better; no person was ever less corrupted by that knowledge.

" Her politeness seems to flow rather from a natural disposition to oblige, than from any rules on that subject; and therefore never fails to strike those who understand good breeding and those who do not.

" She does not run with a girlish eagerness into new friendships, which as they have no foundation in reason, serve only to multiply and imbitter disputes; it is long before she chooses, but then it is fixed for ever; and the first hours of romantic friendships are not warmer than hers after the lapse of years. As she never disgraces her good nature by severe reflections on any body, so she never degrades her judgment by immoderate or ill-placed praises; for every thing violent is contrary to her gentleness of disposition and the evenness of her virtue; she has a steady and firm mind, which takes no more from the female character than the solidity of marble does from its polish and lustre. She has such virtues as make us value the truly great of our own sex; she has all the

winning graces, that make us love even the faults we see in the weak and beautiful of hers."

The following tribute of respect to her, with the humorous conclusion, deprecating the criticism of the rest of the family, is believed to be from the pen of Dr. Brocklesby. It was presented to her about 1774 :—

To Mrs. Burke, on New Year's Day.

May the new year, O Delia, bring
To you each joy that mortals know ;
And may you, blest with cheerful spring,
Ne'er feel the iron winter blow.
May all your hours, your minutes roll,
Exempt from grief, exempt from pain,
Except the tear that melts your soul,
When shed, for suffering worth, in vain.

May all the white and happy hours,
Which grandsire Janus has in store,
Still strew thy path of life with flowers,
And smooth each rugged furrow o'er.
May sweet contentment sooth thy mind,
And blooming health glow through thy frame,
So still unchanged, your soul you'll find,
And still that tranquil breast the same.

Whilst thy loved Lord makes senates hear,
What every Briton ought to know ;
In strains might charm an attic ear,
Or make the Roman's * ashes glow ;
Fair partner of his praise and fame,
Long mayest thou sooth his thoughtful breast;
Whilst the bright undiminished flame,
That hymen warmed, still makes you blest.

* Cicero.

Long may thy lovely darling boy
Thy comfort be, thy hope and pride,
And still each parent's blooming joy,
His father's conduct be his guide.
Thus emulous of such a sire,
In honour clear, sincere in truth,
Virtue shall all his soul inspire,
And wisdom guard the fire of youth.

If (Heavens defend us!) if W—— B——* }
For my sins, should happen this folly to see,
The paper he'd tear, say the bard was an ass,
Who ventured such tags for verses to pass,
And swear that his forehead was sheathed in brass.
For the Doctor† I know, such is his good nature,
He'll govern each muscle, and bridle each feature,
And though long, a judge of the poet's demerit,
Still in hopes of amendment, will not damp his spirit.
R—— B——‡ will laugh for five minutes or more,
But then he'll forget it and all will be o'er.
To you then, dear Madam, for mercy I plead,
Do but think it well meant, tho' ill sung and ill said,
And if now to poor culprit you a pardon extend,
He may prove a good boy, and next year perhaps mend.

The war then lately commenced with France exciting attention to the American colonies as one of the chief points in dispute, there came out in April, 1757, in two volumes octavo, "An Account of the European Settlements in America."

Doubts have been often started whether Mr. Burke was the sole or joint author of this work; there is, however, no question but that he wrote, if not the whole of it, at least by far the greater part. Mr. Shackleton, who had no other means of know-

* William Burke. † Dr. Nugent. ‡ Richard Burke.

ing the fact than from himself or his family, always stated it to be wholly his. The Editor of the edition published by Stockdale in 1808, asserts positively that he saw the receipt for the copy money, amounting to fifty guineas, in Mr. Burke's own hand-writing. Internal evidence tends to the same conclusion both in language and manner, and particularly in some phrases, such as (when speaking of exchanges of territory) the "cutting and shuffling of a treaty of peace," and others equally peculiar, which may be found in his future works. Toward the end of the second volume occurs a passage on population nearly the same in idea and expression as used by him in an argument with Johnson on the same subject some years afterwards, and repeated by Boswell. Similar coincidences may be traced on other points connected with political economy; and the account of the North American colonies, which beyond all question is his, contains the germ of some of his arguments, and much of that intimate acquaintance with the people and country, afterwards displayed by him in parliament. It may be remarked also, that he contends for the probability of a north-west passage, which at the present time occupies so much of the public attention.

On the other hand, the late Lord Macartney said it was the joint production of Edmund, Richard his brother who had joined him from Ireland on commercial pursuits, and their name-sake and most intimate friend through life, William Burke; his lordship was on the most friendly terms with them all, and might have understood the fact to be so, but he himself did not arrive in London till above a

year after the publication. It is also true that Edmund did not subsequently avow it, though for this there might be sufficient reasons; his reputation for instance, did not require such an addition, especially if it could be useful to his brother, or to William Bourke; he might not wish to claim as his own what was in part the work of others, however small that part might be; and being brought out on an emergency, he might deem it an unsatisfactory as well as a hasty production, unworthy of his fame.

Whether wholly his own or not, the sketch, for it professes to be little more,—and an apology is made in the preface for inequality in the style which the reader may not readily discover,—is in many parts masterly, the reflections just and often original, but paraded perhaps too formally and frequently before the reader, so as sometimes to interfere with the facts, or almost to supersede them. The style is what may be termed ambitious, aiming at depth, terseness, and brevity, yet too frequently betraying the effort: no writer, however, need be ashamed of such a work. Mr. Dugald Stewart terms it a masterly sketch. Abbé Raynal is believed to have profited much by it in his history; and at home its popularity was such as to reach a seventh edition; the published price of the two volumes, containing above seven hundred octavo pages, was only eight shillings; this, while it accounts for the small sum received for the copy-right, impresses the fact of the little encouragement then given to literature.

Soon after this time, Mr. Burke, under the pressure of temporary difficulty, is said to have disposed of his books, his coat of arms pasted in some of them,

according to the story, having inadvertently disclosed the secret. Hence it has been asserted that he was frequently so; and those who would throw a slight of some sort upon his memory, in order, by the absence of any more substantial failings to bring greatness down to their own level by some means or other, have said that for many years his pen, exerted in the periodical publications, afforded him the only means he enjoyed of support.

For these assertions there is little or no foundation. The simple fact of declining to be called to the bar, is of itself evidence that had he not had other resources, he would not have declined the profession of a barrister, calculated as he was beyond all question, to be the greatest that ever addressed a jury. His father, who possessed a handsome income from his profession, allowed him about 200l. per annum, at that time a liberal sum, during much of the time he spent in London; and though any additional supplies derived from the exercise of his literary talents were doubtless sufficiently acceptable, as they are to much richer men, it is certain they were not considerable. Literature, as may be believed from the sum given for the work just noticed, was then a wretched trade. Johnson, the first author of the age, could barely elevate himself above abject poverty; and parliamentary, legal, and theatrical reporting, now a cource of emolument to many, and by which several of the law students are enabled to keep their terms with little expense to their friends, were then in a great degree unknown.

There is indeed an amusing, but rather an absurd, coyness among the scribbling race themselves, about

being known to write for periodical works, and to receive payment for their labours. After all, as no man writes well by intuition, so magazines, pamphlets, and newspapers, form the natural nurseries for unfledged authors in which they are enabled to try the strength of their wings before engaging in more arduous flights. Some make the experiment for amusement, some for improvement, some to circulate a favourite opinion, and some who are nevertheless not at all dependant on such small and casual supplies, to be enabled by the produce of their pens to add to their libraries.*

For what reason there should be any slight attached to the idea of profiting in a pecuniary way by literary labour, it is difficult to conceive, except indeed it be the alarming apprehension to the person receiving it, that he may thence be suspected of being *poor*. To accept the reward, however, is not necessarily to be in want of it, or to be under obligation by receiving it. "He who writes otherwise than for money," said Dr. Johnson, "is a fool." So thought Mr. Burke; so said Darwin; so say, and so think, most others whose writings are in request by the world, or who know the severe and solitary toil by which alone a good work can be produced, and who in other respects care nothing for money. An

* A young author, perfectly independent of literature as a trade, lately received from the conductor of a periodical work a few pounds for some of his essays, which he directly laid out in books. "This money," said he, "gives me more pleasure than ten times the sum arising from any other source. I take pride in it, because by the labour of my own mind I am enabled to make myself more extensively acquainted with the minds of others."

author must not be frighted by the term *hireling;* for no man is such except he who sells his principles: or rather perhaps it may be said, that in fact all men who receive pay from royalty downwards, are in this sense of the word hirelings. No man in any station of life, for instance, no statesman, no lawyer, no physician, no clergyman, no soldier, gives his labours, mental or bodily, to society, without hire. Why then should not the author also have his hire without slight or reproach? He who writes gratuitously for a bookseller, works for a man probably richer than himself. This species of charity is therefore misapplied. If a writer can afford to be generous, let it be to those who are really in want; for the fruits of his ingenuity, whether diurnal, monthly, or quarterly, if not necessary to himself, may be advantageously applied to purposes of private benevolence.

Some few years ago, when a member of the House of Commons, of the party of Mr. Fox, under the influence of erroneous information, had been throwing some slight upon the memory of Mr. Burke, as having been obliged to write in the periodical publications for subsistence previously to coming into parliament, Mrs. Burke, who saw the statement in the newspapers, ran her pen through it in the presence of some friends, observing, "Mr. Burke himself would not take the trouble to contradict this, nor indeed any thing else they say of him, but really I have no patience with such reports; I declare them from my own knowledge gross and unfounded falsehoods; that he received money for his publications is true, but the amount was very small—not worth mentioning as a means of support."

CHAPTER III.

Abridgment of English History.—Annual Register.—Acquaintance with Dr. Johnson.—Anecdotes of a Canon of Lichfield.—Mrs. Ann Pitt, Bishop Warburton, Hume, Lord Charlemont, Mr. Fitzherbert.—Connexion with Mr. Gerrard Hamilton.—Letter to Mr. Flood.—Documents connected with Mr. Burke's Pension.—Anecdote of Mr. Burke's humanity.

THE reputation of the Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful being quickly diffused through the literary world by the trading critics, as well as by the most eminent private judges of the day, immediately stamped the author's fame as a man of uncommon ingenuity and very profound philosophical investigation; though some of his theories did not, as might be expected in inquiring into matters of such strict intellectual acuteness and refinement, receive universal assent.

In 1757 a new edition was called for, to which was prefixed, for the first time, the introductory chapter on taste. To his father, who had not been well pleased with his desertion of the law, a copy was sent, which produced in return a present of 100*l.* as a testimony of paternal admiration. Another copy he dispatched to his friend Shackleton, and on one of the blank leaves wrote, as expressive of his affectionate and unceasing regard—

> Accipe et hæc manuum tibi quæ monumenta meorum
> Sint—et longum testentur amorem:

and all his future political works, especially the Thoughts on the Discontents, the Reflections on the French Revolution, the Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs, were transmitted to the same friend.

In the letter accompanying the Essay, dated from Battersea, August 10, 1757, he says, in jocular allusion to his matrimonial adventure, "I am now a married man myself, and therefore claim some respect from the married fraternity; at least for your own sakes you will not pretend to consider me the worse man." And in another part of this letter he apologizes for a long silence by his "manner of life, chequered with various designs, sometimes in London, sometimes in remote parts of the country, sometimes in France, and shortly, please God, to be in America."

The design expressed in the latter part of this sentence never, as has been already stated, took effect. Some persons have believed that it was the invitation of an old fellow-collegian settled in Philadelphia, who thought the sphere of the new world offered a less crowded area for the display of his talents in the law. Whatever may have been the inducement, fortunately he did not persevere in his purpose when the death of his father made him more his own master: genius might have lost one of her most favoured offspring, and England one of her greatest ornaments. But the fact is curious in itself, as expressive of the same vague idea of expatriation which prevailed among many of the extraordinary political characters of the preceding century, and with some of the men of genius, as Goldsmith, Burns, and others, of our own.

In January, 1758, his domestic circle received an addition by the birth of that favourite son, who through life was beloved with even more than parental fondness, and whose death, at the early age of 35, tended in the opinion of his friends to hasten his own. Another son, named Edmund, born about two years afterwards, died in infancy. The wants of an increasing family proved an irresistible stimulus to industry by all the means within his power, and his pen at this time was actively employed on a variety of subjects, some of which, never published, as well as others of an earlier date, though pretty well ascertained to be in existence, have not been recovered by his executors.

One of those which remained in his own possession, was an "Essay towards an Abridgment of English History," which he had intimated to his Ballitore friends some time previously, it was his intention to write at length.

Eight sheets of this work were printed for Dodsley in 1757, but it was then discontinued, probably from hearing that Hume was engaged in treating of the same period of time, and perhaps from being unable to satisfy his own taste, which, on an historical subject, was fastidious. It displays, however, a spirit of close research into the earlier history of our island, not exceeded, perhaps not equalled, by works of much greater pretension, and with more antiquarian knowledge than could possibly be expected; and that portion devoted to the aboriginal people, to the Druids, to the settlement of the Saxons, and to the details relative to their laws and institutions, contains some information new to the general reader.

On the whole it is perhaps the best abstract of that remote period we possess, without any admixture of the fabulous stories so common to the age; and to youth it will be found particularly instructive. The style differs from that of the "European Settlements" in aiming at less of point and effect, but it possesses simplicity and perspicuity; the characters of William the Conqueror, Henry II, and John, are happily drawn, and the distinguished circumstances of their reigns well selected for narration, considered as a work written at the age of 26.

The sketch which he gives of the venerable Bede, as the great father of English literature, and pre-eminently distinguished in a peculiarly dark age (between the years 672 and 735), will interest many.

"The great and justest boast of this monastery (that of Landisforn, at the mouth of the river Tees, afterwards removed to the vicinity of Durham,) is the venerable Beda, who was educated and spent his whole life there. An account of his writings is an account of the English learning in that age, taken in its most advantageous view. Many of his works remain, and he wrote both in prose and verse, and upon all sorts of subjects. His theology forms the most considerable part of his writings. He wrote comments upon almost the whole Scripture, and several Homilies on the principal Festivals of the Church. Both the comments and sermons are generally allegorical in the construction of the text, and simply moral in the application. In these discourses several things seem strained and fanciful; but herein he followed entirely the manner of the earlier

fathers, from whom the greatest part of his divinity is not so much imitated as extracted. The systematic and logical method, which seems to have been first introduced into theology by John of Damascus, and which afterwards was known by the name of school-divinity, was not then in use, at least in the western church; though soon after it made an amazing progress. In this scheme, the allegorical gave way to the literal explication; the imagination had less scope; and the affections were less touched, but it prevailed by an appearance more solid and philosophical; by an order more scientific; and by a readiness of application, either for the solution or the exciting of doubts and difficulties. They also cultivated in this monastery the study of natural philosophy and astronomy. There remains of Beda, one entire book, and some scattered essays on these subjects. This book, *De Rerum Naturâ*, is concise and methodical, and contains no very contemptible abstract of the physics, which were taught in the decline of the Roman Empire. It was somewhat unfortunate, that the infancy of English learning was supported by the dotage of the Roman, and that even the spring-head from whence they drew their instructions was itself corrupted. However, the works of the great masters of the ancient science still remained; but in natural philosophy the worst was the most fashionable.

"The Epicurean physics, the most approaching to rational, had long lost all credit by being made the support of an impious theology and a loose morality. The fine visions of Plato fell into some discredit by the abuse which heretics had made of them; and

the writings of Aristotle seem to have been then the only ones much regarded, even in natural philosophy, in which branch of science alone they are unworthy of him. Beda entirely follows his system. The appearances of nature are explained by matter and form, and by the four vulgar elements; acted upon by the four supposed qualities of hot, dry, moist, and cold. His astronomy is on the common system of the ancients; sufficient for the four purposes to which they applied it; but otherwise imperfect and grossly erroneous. He makes the moon larger than the earth; though a reflection on the nature of eclipses, which he understood, might have satisfied him of the contrary, but he had so much to copy, that he had little time to examine. These speculations, however erroneous, were still useful; for though men err in assigning the causes of natural operations, the works of nature are by this means brought under their consideration; which cannot be done without enlarging the mind. The science may be false, or frivolous; the improvement will be real.

"It may here be remarked, that soon afterwards the monks began to apply themselves to astronomy and chronology from the disputes, which were carried on with so much heat, and so little effect, concerning the proper time of celebrating Easter; and the English owed the cultivation of these noble sciences to one of the most trivial controversies of ecclesiastical discipline. Beda did not confine his attention to those superior sciences. He treated of music, and of rhetoric, of grammar, and of the art of versification, and of arithmetic, both by letters and on the fingers: and his work on this last subject is the only

one, in which that piece of antique curiosity has been preserved to us. All these are short pieces; some of them are in the catechetical method; and seem designed for the immediate use of the pupils in his monastery, in order to furnish them with some leading ideas in the rudiments of these arts, then newly introduced into this country.

" He likewise made, and probably for the same purpose, a very ample and valuable collection of short philosophical, political, and moral maxims from Aristotle, Plato, Seneca, and other sages of heathen antiquity. He made a separate book of shining commonplaces and remarkable passages, extracted from the works of Cicero; of whom he was a great admirer; though he seems to have been not an happy or diligent imitator of his style. From a view of these pieces, we may form an idea of what stock in the sciences the English at that time possessed; and what advance they had made. That work of Beda, which is the best known and most esteemed, is the Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation. Disgraced by want of choice, and frequently by a confused ill-disposition of his matter, and blemished with a degree of credulity next to infantine, it is still a valuable, and for the time a surprising performance. The book opens with a description of this island, which would not have disgraced a classical author; and he has prefixed to it a chronological abridgment of sacred and profane history, connected from the beginning of the world; which, though not critically adapted to his main design, is of far more intrinsic value, and indeed, displays a vast fund of historical erudition. On the whole, though this father of the

English learning seems to have been but a genius of the middle class neither elevated nor subtile, and one, who wrote in a low style, simple but not elegant, yet when we reflect upon the time in which he lived, the place in which he spent his whole life, within the walls of a monastery, in so remote and wild a country, it is impossible to refuse him the praise of an incredible industry, and a generous thirst of knowledge.

" That a nation, who not fifty years before had but just begun to emerge from a barbarism so perfect, that they were unfurnished even with an alphabet, should, in so short a time, have established so flourishing a seminary of learning, and have produced so eminent a teacher, is a circumstance, which I imagine no other nation besides England can boast."

After adverting to the leading circumstances of the reign of William the Conqueror, he gives the following summary of the character of that monarch, which though drawn with no common skill, will by many probably be thought too favourable—

" There is nothing more memorable in history, than the actions, fortunes, and character of this great man; whether we consider the grandeur of the plans he formed; the courage and wisdom with which they were executed, or the splendour of that success, which, adorning his youth, continued without the smallest reverse to support his age, even to the last moments of his life. He lived above seventy years, and reigned within ten years as long as he lived; sixty over his dukedom, above twenty over England;

both of which he acquired or kept by his own magnanimity, with hardly any other title than he derived from his arms; so that he might be reputed, in all respects, as happy as the highest ambition, the most fully gratified, can make a man. The silent, inward satisfactions of domestic happiness he neither had, nor sought.

"He had a body suited to the character of his mind, erect, firm, large, and active; whilst to be active was a praise; a countenance stern, and which became command. Magnificent in his living, reserved in his conversation, grave in his common deportment, but relaxing with a wise facetiousness, he knew how to relieve his mind and preserve his dignity; for he never forfeited by a personal acquaintance that esteem he had acquired by his great actions.

"Unlearned in books, he formed his understanding by the rigid discipline of a large and complicated experience. He knew men much, and therefore generally trusted them but little; but when he knew any man to be good, he reposed in him an entire confidence, which prevented his prudence from degenerating into a vice. He had vices in his composition, and great ones; but they were vices of a great mind: ambition, the malady of every extensive genius; and avarice, the madness of the wise: one chiefly actuated his youth; the other governed his age. The vices of young and light minds, the joys of wine, and the pleasures of love, never reached his aspiring nature. The general run of men he looked on with contempt, and treated with

cruelty when they opposed him. Nor was the rigour of his mind to be softened but with the appearance of extraordinary fortitude in his enemies, which, by a sympathy congenial to his own virtues, always excited his admiration, and ensured his mercy. So that there were often seen in this one man, at the same time, the extremes of a savage cruelty, and a generosity, that does honour to human nature.

" Religion too seemed to have a great influence on his mind from policy, or from better motives; but his religion was displayed in the regularity, with which he performed its duties, not in the submission he showed to its ministers, which was never more than what good government required. Yet his choice of a councellor and favourite was, not according to the mode of the time, out of that order, and a choice that does honour to his memory. This was Lanfranc, a man of great learning for the times, and extraordinary piety. He owed his elevation to William; but, though always inviolably faithful, he never was the tool or flatterer of the power which raised him; and the greater freedom he showed, the higher he rose in the confidence of his master. By mixing with the concerns of state he did not lose his religion and conscience, or make them the covers or instruments of ambition; but tempering the fierce policy of a new power by the mild lights of religion, he became a blessing to the country, in which he was promoted. The English owed to the virtue of this stranger, and the influence he had over the King, the little remains of liberty they

continued to enjoy; and at last such a degree of his confidence, as in some sort counterbalanced the severities of the former part of his reign."

The circumstances that led to the demand, and grant, of Magna Charta from King John, are thus shortly noticed—

"It may not be improper to pause here for a few moments, and to consider a little more minutely the causes, which had produced the grand revolution in favour of liberty, by which this reign was distinguished; and to draw all the circumstances, which led to this remarkable event, into a single point of view.

"Since the death of Edward the Confessor, only two princes succeeded to the crown upon undisputed titles. William the Conqueror established his by force of arms. His successors were obliged to court the people by yielding many of the possessions, and many of the prerogatives of the crown; but they supported a dubious title by a vigorous administration; and recovered by their policy, in the course of their reign, what the necessity of their affairs obliged them to relinquish for the establishment of their power. Thus was the nation kept continually fluctuating between freedom and servitude. But the principles of freedom were predominant, though the thing itself was not yet fully formed. The continual struggle of the clergy for the ecclesiastical liberties laid open at the same time the natural claims of the people; and the clergy were obliged to show some respect for those claims, in order to add strength to their own party.

" The concessions, which Henry the Second made to the ecclesiastics on the death of Becket, which were afterwards confirmed by Richard the First, gave a grievous blow to the authority of the crown; as thereby an order of so much power and influence triumphed over it in many essential points. The latter of these princes brought it very low by the whole tenour of his conduct. Always abroad, the royal authority was felt in its full vigour without being supported by the dignity, or softened by the graciousness of the royal presence. Always in war, he considered his dominions only as a resource for his armies. The demeans of the crown were squandered: every office in the state was made vile by being sold. Excessive grants, followed by violent and arbitrary resumptions, tore to pieces the whole contexture of the government. The civil tumults, which arose in that king's absence, showed, that the king's lieutenants at least might be disobeyed with impunity.

" Then came John to the crown. The arbitrary taxes, which he imposed very early in his reign, which offended even more by the improper use made of them than their irregularity, irritated the people extremely, and joined with all the preceding causes to make his government contemptible. Henry the Second, during his contest with the church, had the address to preserve the barons in his interests. Afterwards, when the barons had joined in the rebellion of his children, this wise prince found means to secure the bishops and ecclesiastics. But John drew upon himself at once the hatred of all orders of his subjects. His struggle with the Pope

weakened him; his submission to the Pope weakened him yet more. The loss of his foreign territories, besides what he lost along with them in reputation, made him entirely dependant on England; whereas his predecessors made one part of their territories subservient to the preservation of their authority in another, where it was endangered. Add to all these causes the personal character of the king, in which there was nothing uniform or sincere, and which introduced the like unsteadiness into all his government. He was indolent, yet restless in his disposition; fond of working by violent methods, without any vigour; boastful, but continually betraying his fears; showing, on all occasions, such a desire of peace as hindered him from ever enjoying it. Having no spirit of order, he never looked forward; content by any temporary expedient to extricate himself from a present difficulty. Rash, arrogant, perfidious, irreligious, unquiet, he made a tolerable head of a party, but a bad king; and had talents fit to disturb another's government, not to support his own.

"A most striking contrast presents itself between the conduct and fortune of John, and his adversary Philip. Philip came to the crown when many of the provinces of France, by being in the hands of too powerful vassals, were in a manner dismembered from the kingdom; the royal authority was very low in what remained. He re-united to the crown a country as valuable as what belonged to it before; he reduced his subjects of all orders to a stricter obedience than they had given to his predecessors. He withstood the papal usurpation, and yet used it

as an instrument in his designs; whilst John, who inherited a great territory, and an entire prerogative, by his vices and weakness gave up his independency to the Pope, his prerogative to his subjects, and a large part of his dominions to the King of France."

About this time English literature and English history became indebted to Mr. Burke in no ordinary degree by the establishment, in conjunction with Dodsley, of the Annual Register. Of the excellence and utility of this work, the plan of which was ingenious, while the execution ensured great and unfading popularity, there never has been but one opinion. Several of the first volumes passed to a fifth and sixth edition. It is the best, and the most comprehensive of all the periodical works, without any admixture of their trash, or their frequent tediousness of detail; many of the sketches of contemporary history, written from his immediate dictation for about 30 years, are not merely valuable as coming from such a pen, but masterly in themselves; and in the estimation of some of the chief writers of our day, are not likely to be improved by any future historian. They form, in fact, the chief sources whence all the principal histories of the last 60 years have been, and must continue to be, compiled, besides furnishing a variety of other useful and illustrative matter. The Annual Register for 1758, the first of the series, came out in June of the following year. Latterly a Mr. Ireland wrote much of it under Mr. Burke's immediate direction.

This work also he never thought proper to claim. The fact of his participation in it has been always

matter of doubt, though, from an attentive examination of circumstances minute in themselves connected with this work, added to the modesty with which he speaks of himself at all times, and even the suppression of his name on important occasions, when some extraordinary compliments were paid him, both in and out of the House of Commons, the present writer was satisfied of the affirmative, even before he received more positive information. The sum allowed for it by Dodsley was only 100*l.*; several of the receipts for the copy-money, in his own handwriting, are still extant; the two following, for the year 1761, as being at hand, are given for the satisfaction of the reader: *

"Received from Mr. Dodsley the sum of 50*l.* on account of the Annual Register of 1761, this 28th March, 1761.

"EDM. BURKE."

"Received from Messrs. R. and T. Dodsley, the sum of 50*l.* sterl. being in full for the Annual Register of 1761, this 30th day of March, 1762.

"EDM. BURKE."

Trifling causes are tritely said to be sometimes productive of important effects; and the composition of the Annual Register may have tended to influence the future career and fame of its author.

* The originals, written on narrow slips of (of course) *unstamped* paper, are in the possession of William Upcott, Esq. of the London Institution, to whom I am indebted for a perusal of them.

By the investigations necessary for the historical article he became acquainted with the workings of practical politics, the secret springs by which they were put in motion, and with some of the chief actors concerned. A careful writer of contemporary history for a series of years, cannot avoid almost, if he would, minutely scanning the political features of his own country and of Europe. He who has to speak during the session, and meditate during the recess—who acts on the great theatre of politics one half the year, and who must combine, analyze, and ponder upon the proceedings in order to write upon them, during the other, may not ultimately become a wise or great statesman; but there is no doubt that he goes the most effectual way towards it. To Mr. Burke it imparted knowledge and experience almost without the trouble of the search.

For his uncle, Mr. Nagle, of Moneamyny, in Ireand, he preserved a particular affection, on account of the kindness experienced from him since childhood, and from being a friendly intercessor with his father, whenever the latter felt displeased at what he considered the inactivity (as far as an active profession was concerned) of his son. To this gentleman he wrote frequently; and some of the letters being preserved, give us proofs of an amiable and grateful disposition, written as they were, in the full confidence of never being seen out of the family circle*—

* This has been published recently in that popular work the New Monthly Magazine.

"DEAR SIR,

"Cousin Will Burke left yesterday. He made our little set very happy by his company, and by the account he gave of all our friends on the Blackwater. He said that you were so good to express some desire of hearing from us; I am too much pleased with the intelligence to inquire very closely into it, but gladly lay hold of the first opportunity of assuring you how heartily I am rejoiced to find I have still some place in your remembrance; I am sure I should entertain a very bad opinion of my own memory, and a much worse of my heart, if I was capable of forgetting the many obligations I owe you. There are very few persons in the world for whom I have so great a respect, or whose good opinion I should be more glad to have than yours. When I had resolved to write to you, I was at a loss to know how I should make my letters worth the trouble I must give you in sending for them (for you must know I intend to trouble you in that way very often) but I recollected that some of our London newspapers might prove no disagreeable entertainment, to you, and that by this means you would receive some accounts earlier than the Dublin papers can give them. I therefore enclose with this what I think one of our best and most entertaining news-letters, as it not only contains as much of all foreign transactions as any of the others, but often such remarks upon them as may serve to explain many public affairs, or at least show something of the general conversation here concerning them. It contains besides some accounts

of the new books from time to time published. I should have done this some days ago, but I waited to get in such a stock of franks as to enable me to continue to send you the papers without interruption.

" In the beginning of my letter I made mention of Will Burke's having begun his journey; but lest his family should hear of it and, expecting to see him soon, may be uneasy if they find him delayed longer than the journey requires, it is proper to let you know that he may probably be obliged to wait some days in Chester for the arrival of Hugh Massey. By the little I have seen of that gentleman, he seems to have a great deal of good nature. He is to go to Ireland in company with my Lord Carberry, and will labour, and I hope with success, to extricate cousin Garret from the troublesome situation which I am heartily sorry to find he is in.

" I could employ what remains of my paper, and with great satisfaction to myself, in desiring my best remembrance to my friends with you and about you; but they are so many, and my good wishes for them all so hearty, that I should find it much easier to fill my paper than to satisfy myself. I must therefore trust to theirs and your good nature to represent what I must still be defective in if I had said a great deal more. Mrs. Burke has not the pleasure of being known to you, but she joins me in the sincerest regards for you all; she desires in particular to be remembered to her sister Peggy, of whom she has heard many things that pleased her very much, from Mrs. Burke; my love to her. My

brother is in the city* at a great distance from us, or he would gladly join us in the same sentiments to you, and to her, and to all our friends.

" I am, my dear Uncle,

" Your very affectionate humble servant,

" EDM. BURKE.

" London, Wimple (Wimpole)-street,
Cavendish-square, April 17, 1759."

An intimacy between him and the eminent Samuel Johnson had commenced some time previous to this, at the table of Garrick. On Christmas-day, 1758, Mr. Murphy dined with them, and was surprised to find the lexicographer submit to contradiction, India being the subject of discussion, from his companion 20 years younger than himself, which he would tolerate in no other person, whatever their talents or experience. A mutual admiration seemed to be the first feeling between them, which nothing afterward served to diminish; surviving occasional sharp contentions for victory in conversation, the clashing of opposite political attachments and opinions, the almost irreconcileable feuds occasioned even among friends by the American contest, and the devoted adherence of the orator to that party which the other in his strong manner denominated " Whig dogs."

Nothing contributed more to this esteem than Burke's faculty to excel in what his friend so eminently practised himself and loved in others, " good talk." The conversation of the former, if less strik-

* The first views of Richard Burke were directed to commerce.

ing than that of Johnson, was more conciliating; if less pungent, perhaps quite as entertaining; and in general society much more acceptable, because less overbearing.

He communicated to his hearers scarcely less information without leaving behind it the sting of bitter sarcasm, or rude contempt, to rankle in the breast of a defeated antagonist. His manners were at the same time unassuming, distinguished more for suavity than that variety and vivacity which are too often the results of studied efforts at display.

No great man ever praised another more than Johnson praised Burke. Remarking in conversation that the fame of men was generally exaggerated in the world, somebody quoted Burke as an exception, and he instantly admitted it—"Yes; Burke is an extraordinary man; his stream of mind is perpetual." "Burke's talk," said he, at another time, "is the ebullition of his mind; he does not talk from a desire of distinction, but because his mind is full." An argumentative contest with him, he seemed to think required such exertion of his own mind, that when unwell at one time, and Burke's name was mentioned, he observed, "That fellow calls forth all my powers. Were I to see Burke now it would kill me." "Burke," added he again, "is the only man whose common conversation corresponds with the general fame which he has in the world. Take up whatever topic you please, he is ready to meet you." Often did he repeat, "That no man of sense could meet Mr. Burke by accident under a gateway, to avoid a shower, without being convinced that he was the first man in England."

"Burke, Sir," said he at another time, "is such

a man, that if you met him for the first time in the street where you were stopped by a drove of oxen, and you and he stepped aside for shelter but for five minutes, he'd talk to you in such a manner that when you parted you would say—this is an extraordinary man.—Now you may be long enough with me without finding any thing extraordinary." He allowed him to be a man of consummate and unrivalled abilities, very early in his parliamentary career ;—" with vast variety of knowlenge, store of imagery, and copiousness of language."—A frequent question to Mr. Murphy was, " Are you not proud of your countryman ?" adding occasionally, " Cum talis sit utinam noster esset !" Of all the triumphs of Mr. Burke, it was perhaps the greatest to compel the admiration and personal love of a man whose mind was at once so capacious and so good, so powerful and so prejudiced, so celebrated and so deserving of celebrity.

What Johnson termed " Burke's affluence of conversation," and which he so highly prized and frequently talked of, often proved as may be supposed, a source of mingled wonder and admiration to others. Few men of education but were impressed by it, and fewer still who had the opportunity of being in his society frequently, forgot the pleasure they had thus enjoyed. Many years after this period, Mr. Burke and a friend travelling through Litchfield for the first time, stopped to change horses, when being desirous to see more of a place which had given birth to his friend Johnson than a casual glance afforded, they strolled toward the cathedral. One of the Canons observing two respectable strangers making

inquiries of the attendants, very politely came up to offer such explanations as they desired, when a few minutes only had elapsed before the feeling of superior information on such matters, with which he had met them, because changed to something like amazement at the splendour, depth, and variety of the conversation of one of the strangers. No matter what topic started, whether architecture, antiquities, ecclesiastical history, the revenues, persecutions, or the lives of the early ornaments and leading members of the church; he touched upon them all with the readiness and accuracy of a master. They had not long separated when some friends of the Canon met him hurrying along the street; "I have had," said he, "quite an adventure; I have been conversing for this half hour past with a man of the most extraordinary powers of mind and extent of information, which it has ever been my fortune to meet with, and I am now going to the inn to ascertain if possible who this stranger is." There he learnt that his late companion, who had just set off, was the celebrated Mr. Burke; he regretted much that he had not known this sooner; and his friends that they had not had an opportunity of knowing or seeing him at all. The circumstance formed an exemplification of Johnson's remark, that wherever met with, he was never to be mistaken for an ordinary man.

In speaking of Burke's social hours, the late Mr. Grattan not long before his death, observed to several friends that he was the greatest man in conversation he had met with. A nobleman who was present (Lord C.) inquired whether he did not think Curran on some occasions greater? "No, my Lord," was

the reply—"Curran indeed had much wit; but Burke had wit too, and, in addition to wit, boundless stores of wisdom and knowledge."

The ease with which he introduced a subject, and the subtlety by which it was often carried on, were alluded to by Goldsmith, when he said, in reply to an eulogy on Johnson's powers of conversation—"But is he like Burke, who winds into his subject like a serpent?"

Among the other eminent persons to which the reputation of his philosophical essay and powers of conversation gave a ready introduction, were Dr. Warburton, George Lord Littleton, Mr. Fitzherbert, member for Derby, Soame Jenyns, Mr. (afterwards Sir Joshua) Reynolds, Dr. Markham afterwards Archbishop of York, Pultney Earl of Bath, and perhaps a more remarkable person than either, Mrs. Anne Pitt, sister of the celebrated minister then at the head of the cabinet. This lady, Mr. Burke used to say, possessed not only great and agreeable talents, but was the most perfectly eloquent person he ever heard speak. He lamented not having committed to paper one particular conversation in which the richness and variety of her discourse quite astonished him. She was accustomed to tell her great brother in their argumentative contests, that he knew nothing but Spenser's Fairy Queen. "And no matter how that was said," added Mr. Burke, in mentioning the circumstance, "but whoever relishes and reads Spenser as he ought to be read, will have a strong hold of the English language."

Of his acquaintance with Warburton, which was but slight, he gave the following account in conver-

sation with Mr. Wilkes, who had commenced a smart attack on the character of the Bishop, which Mr. Burke rather defended.—" I was in a large private company in which it so happened I did not hear the names of the persons who sat on either side of me. One of them, however, attracted my attention in a very particular manner by the variety and depth of his conversation, carried on in an easy, good-humoured tone, and sometimes he was even amusing. From the latter circumstances—so contrary to what might be supposed from the extreme violence of the controversialist—I must confess I was for some time in doubt; but at length exclaimed—' Sir, I think I cannot mistake; you must be the celebrated Dr. Warburton; *aut Erasmus aut Diabolus.*' Warburton smiled, and we had much interesting conversation during the remainder of the evening."

To Sir Joshua Reynold's and Wilkes he also related an anecdote of the Bishop, not a little indicative of the vanity and self-importance of that Prelate, which had been told him by Blakey, the artist. This gentleman having been employed by Warburton to design the frontispiece to his edition of Pope, received directions to make him (Warburton) the principal and foreground figure in the composition, and the poet only secondary. These orders were of course obeyed, and in the piece the light proceeds upward from Warburton to Pope, in opposition to the usual rules of art.—Wilkes wittily observed, " It was not merely on that, but on all occasions, that the Bishop and the Poet had been looking different ways."

Of Mr. Fitzherbert, a man of a very different stamp, who was nevertheless a great friend to authors

and to letters, Dr. Johnson drew the following character—"There was no sparkle, no brilliancy in Fitzherbert; but I never knew a man who was so generally acceptable. He made every body quite easy, overpowered nobody by the superiority of his talents, made no man think worse of himself by being his rival, seemed always to listen, did not oblige you to hear much from him, and did not oppose what you said. Every body liked him; but he had no friend as I understand the word, nobody with whom he exchanged intimate thoughts. People were willing to think well of every thing about him." One part of this account is certainly not correct; Mr. Burke, the Marquis of Rockingham and others lived on the most intimate footing with this gentleman; but Johnson's habitual harshness probably deterred him from being so unreserved in conversation with him as he otherwise might.

Hume, whom he first met at the table of Garrick, was another acquaintance; and the historian found his opinions of so much consequence in London, that on the publication of Adam Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments, he thought it necessary to present him with a copy, writing his reasons to the author, April 1st, 1759.

"Wedderburn and I made presents of our copies to such of our acquaintance as we thought good judges, and proper to spread the reputation of the book. I sent one to the Duke of Argyle, to Lord Littleton, Horace Walpole, Soame Jenyns, and Burke, an Irish gentleman, who wrote lately a very pretty treatise on the Sublime." A considerable degree of intimacy arose from this civility. But on

religion and politics their sentiments were too diametrically opposite ever to approach to agreement; and a difference of opinion respecting the Irish massacre of 1641 gave rise to some animated discussions between them; Burke maintaining, from documents existing in Dublin University, that the common accounts of that event were overcharged; Hume, that the statements in his history were correct. With Adam Smith himself a greater degree of friendship prevailed; his work was termed in the Annual Register of that year "excellent; a dry abstract of which would convey no juster idea of it than the skeleton of a departed beauty would of her form when she was alive." And on subsequently coming to London this philosopher paid a high compliment to the sound judgment of Mr. Burke, as the only man he had met with who thought as he did on the chief topics of political economy,* without previous communication.

* It appears that Mr. Fox, by his own confession to a living writer (C. Butler, Esq. of Lincoln's Inn), never read Adam Smith's great work on the Wealth of Nations: that "there was something in all these subjects which passed his comprehension; something so wide, that he could never embrace them himself, or find any one who did."—This account of the science of Political Economy is at variance with all opinions of the best informed men, and in itself certainly inaccurate. It is another proof, however, of what the present writer has advanced in another part of this work, in sketching his character, namely, that he was impatient of study—of mental labour on subjects of abstract inquiry—of profiting as he might have done by the experience and intense meditation of others; consequently, that though always a great man, he did not sufficiently discipline his mind to become a truly wise one.

Mr. Burke used often to say to Mr. Fox and others, speaking of Hume in familiar conversation, that in manners he was an easy, unaffected man, previous to going to Paris as Secretary to Lord Hertford, the British Ambassador; but that the adulation and caresses of the female wits of that capital had been too powerful even for a *philosopher*; and the result was, he returned a literary coxcomb.

He remarked likewise, that Hume had taken very little trouble with his history, particularly as to the earlier accounts of this island, having examined very few ancient records or writers, his aim being rather to make out a pleasing narrative than to ascertain facts. This, Mr. Burke said, he had discovered in consequence of having in some degree gone over the same ground himself. But in addition to this, Hume himself, being pushed pretty hard in conversation, acknowledged to Boswell on one occasion, that he had not paid much attention to the older historians on controverted points; he had merely dipped into them; for little he thought was to be gained by a minute examination.

The reign of Charles II., Mr. Burke added, was the period on which Hume had bestowed the most labour, he having expressed more than once in conversation, as well as in writing, an unaccountable partiality for that monarch. Many important parts of the history are undoubtedly very superficial; and the discoveries daily making in historical researches are likely to diminish still more his authority with strict inquirers into facts; but after all, it may be doubted whether he has not done as much as can be expected from a general historian.

The opinion of Mr. Burke, in the argument with Hume, respecting the Irish records, of facts being much misrepresented in all historical notices of that country, as an examination of the original documents would show, is stated with some force in the fragments of his tract on the Popery laws.

He calls the histories of Ireland "miserable performances," and adds—"But there is an interior history of Ireland, *the genuine voice of its records and monuments*, which speaks a very different language from these histories—from Temple and from Clarendon; these restore nature to its just rights, and policy to its proper order. *For they even now show to those who have been at the pains to examine them, and they may show one day to all the world*, that these rebellions were not produced by toleration, but by persecution; that they arose not from just and mild government, but from the most unparalleled oppression. These records will be far from giving the least countenance to a doctrine so repugnant to humanity and good sense, as that the security of any establishment, civil or religious, can ever depend upon the misery of those who live under it, or that its danger can ever arise from their quiet and prosperity."*

About this time Mr. Burke occasionally resided at Plaistow in Essex. A lady, then about fourteen years old, and residing in that neighbourhood, informs the writer that she perfectly remembers him there; that his brother Richard lived chiefly with

* Burke's Works, vol. ix. p. 393.

him; and that they were much noticed in the neighbourhood for talents and sociable qualities, and particularly for having a variety of visitors who were understood to be authors soliciting a private opinion of their works, and not unfrequently men of rank.

Some of the best books of the time, as Hume and Robertson's Histories, Leland's Philip of Macedon, Walpole's Royal and Noble Authors, and a variety of others, were sent for his perusal, and some were noticed in the Annual Register, though it may be doubted whether his connection with that work was known. In noticing Johnson's Rasselas, in this year, there is an observation of his which has been often repeated since by other critics, as if the writers claimed it for their own. "The instruction which is found in works of this kind, when they convey any instruction at all, is not the predominant part, but arises accidentally in the course of a story planned only to please. But in this novel, the moral is the principal object, and the story is a mere vehicle to convey the instruction.".

A letter to his uncle about this time (11th of October, 1759, from Wimpole-street), alludes to his brother Richard's first trip to the West Indies on a mercantile adventure—

"My brother has been beforehand with me in almost every thing I could say. My conduct stands in need of as many apologies as his, but I am afraid our apologies might be almost as troublesome as our neglects. All I can say is, that I have been, I think it is now eleven years, from the county of Cork, yet my remembrance of my friends there is as fresh as if I

had left it yesterday. My gratitude for their favours, and my love for their characters, is rather heightened, as the oftener I think of them—and I think of them very often, they must be. This I can say with great truth. Believe me, dear Sir, it would be a great pleasure to me to hear as often from you as it is convenient. Do not give yourself any trouble about franks; I value very little that trifling expense, and I should very little deserve to hear from my friends, if I scrupled to pay a much higher price for that satisfaction. If I had any thing that you could have pleasure in to send you from hence, I should be a punctual correspondent; there is nothing here except what the newspapers contain, that can interest you; but nothing can come from the Blackwater which does not interest me very greatly. Poor Dick is on the point of quitting us; however, he has such advantageous prospects where he is going, that I part from him with the less regret. One of the first merchants here has taken him by the hand, and enabled him to go off with a very valuable cargo. He has another advantage and satisfaction in his expedition; one of our best friends here goes at the same time in one of the first places in the island."

Besides Lord Bath, Lord Lyttleton, and Horace Walpole, Mr. Burke knew several other persons who had been opposed to, or connected with, the administration of Sir Robert Walpole; and from these he derived some information regarding the secret politics of the time, as well as formed a more favourable opinion of that minister than many have been inclined to entertain. In more than one of his pamph-

lets he speaks of him with respect. In conversation also he used to say, that no minister aimed more sincerely at the real prosperity of the country, or went more wisely to work to secure it, had not the violence of opposition often prevented him from doing as he wished. He did justice to his good humour, his affability, and his sociable qualities, which gained him friends even among his political opponents.

It was Mr. Burke who first told the story, which has been since so often repeated, of Sir Robert, who when he had retired to private life from the fatigues of public business, desired his son to get him a book to read to him. The son asked on what subject? —should it be history? No, said Sir Robert, not history; there can be no truth in that. He admitted philosophical speculations, travels, and Pliny; but from his own experience he was convinced that history could not be true.

Mr. William Burke was also frequently a visitor at Plaistow, who, possessing very considerable talents, literary and political, and united in the strictest friendship with Edmund and Richard from boyhood, was said to be associated with them in some of their writings.

On the publication in 1760 of Lord Bath's letter to two great men, meaning Mr. Pitt and the Duke of Newcastle, on the propriety of retaining Canada in preference to any acquisitions in the West Indies, in the proposed conditions of peace, this gentleman wrote a reply, strongly recommending the retention of Guadaloupe and other islands; to which Dr. Franklin thought it necessary to write a rejoinder, supporting

the opinion of Lord Bath.* Another pamphlet, said to have been corrected by Edmund, came from the pen of William Burke, in 1761, on the failure of the negociation with M. Bussy, entitled, "An Examination of the Commercial Principles of the late Negociation." Some further notices of this gentleman will occur hereafter; it may be remarked, however, that he and Richard Burke wrote much on political topics in the newspapers and other periodical works at this time, and for nearly twenty years afterwards, which has been improperly attributed to Edmund, who, from being in parliament, found sufficient employment in pursuing nobler game.

A letter to Agmondisham Vesey, Esq., an old college acquaintance, dated from Sunning Hill, Sept. 10, 1760, and addressed to his friend at Lucan, alludes to one of those momentary fits of displeasure sometimes felt by his father from the cause already mentioned—

"I cannot express how much I am obliged to you for your kind and successful endeavours in my favour; of whatever advantage the remittance was, the assurance you give me of my father's reconciliation was a great deal more pleasing, and both indeed were rendered infinitely more agreeable to me by passing through your hands. I am sensible how very much I am indebted to your good nature upon this occasion. If one has but little merit, it is some

* The opinion of the Burkes, after all, was the most just. America with such a neighbour would have become more dependant on England. M. de Vergennes used to mention it as one of the greatest political errors that had ever been committed.

Butler's Reminiscences, p. 156.

consolation to have partial friends. Lord Lyttleton has been at Hagley for this month past, or near the matter; where for the first time he receives his friends in his new house. He was so obliging to invite me; I need not say that I am much concerned to find I shall not be able to obey his Lordship's commands, and that I must lose for this year at least the sight of that agreeable place, and the conversation of its agreeable owner. Mrs. Montagu * is, I believe, at Tunbridge, for she told me on her leaving town, that she intended to make a pretty long stay there. May I flatter myself with the hope of seeing you this winter in London? I cannot so easily forget the evenings I have passed not to be most desirous of renewing them."

Mr. Burke, in addition to his literary labours, was now waiting for an opportunity to push his way in the political world, to compensate for the advantages of the profession which he had deserted. He was not, however, as has been untruly said, either living in obscurity, or in distress, but, on the contrary, associating, as we see, with some of the highest and most estimable characters in the country, though himself in a private station. He occupied a house first in Wimpole Street and then in Queen Anne Street, near to Mr. Fitzherbert's; his father-in-law, Dr. Nugent, who had removed to London, lived with him, and continued to do so for the seven following years, until his removal to Beaconsfield, forming an example of a most united and happy family.

* Well known for her literary parties in London, and for an "Essay on Shakespeare."

His predilections during this time were undoubtedly political; much of his studies and writings tended to this point; the society with which he mixed served to confirm it; and the possession of an able pen, a clear head, and a latent confidence in his own powers, increased a prepossession which promised the readiest avenue to fame and power. A slender opening into public life at length seemed to offer.

Among the warmest admirers of his talents was the amiable and patriotic Lord Charlemont; a peer without undue pride, a man of fashion without foppery, a good scholar though never at a public school or university, a voluminous writer without courting the honours of the press, and a patriot with little of the leaven of faction. Born to a title and competent fortune, he laid his country under no contribution for his services, and on most occasions gave his vote to the ministry or to the opposition as the public interests seemed to require. He lived chiefly in Ireland, not as a matter of preference, but from a sense of duty to the country whence he derived his birth, his title, and his income. He wielded many years after this time a tremendous military engine, the Irish Volunteers, at a moment of strong national excitement and difficulty, in a manner the most prudent and able. A patron and friend of literature, he sought and valued the society of its most eminent professors. No man was more popular in his own country, or seemed better to approach the model of what a nobleman should be in all countries.

Mr. Burke said many years afterwards, "Lord Charlemont is a man of such polished manners, of a

mind so truly adorned, and disposed to the adoption of whatever is excellent and praiseworthy, that to see and converse with him would alone induce me, or might induce any one who relished such qualities, to pay a visit to Dublin."

His weaknesses were few, and would not be worth enumerating, had not some of them led, almost in the last stage of life, to an interruption of correspondence with his then celebrated friend. He thought, it seems, that public virtue centred chiefly in the Whigs: he had too strong a jealousy of his Roman Catholic fellow-subjects and countrymen; he considered the revolution in France as the dawn of rational liberty; he leaned to the question of parliamentary reform in Ireland, at a moment when he saw and acknowledged that its chief supporters entertained, as the subsequent rebellion proved, more dangerous designs; and he was too much of an Irishman to look on the contemplated union with England otherwise than as the ruin of his country.

By this distinguished character Mr. Burke was introduced in 1759 to another of not less notoriety. This was Mr. William Gerard (commonly called single-speech) Hamilton, a gentleman who, after a few able efforts in the House of Commons, gained more celebrity by afterwards keeping his tongue still, than many others by the most determined volubility.

The son of a lawyer, grounded in the same profession himself, and bred at Oriel College, Oxford, he, in May, 1754, transplanted himself from Lincoln's Inn to the House of Commons as member for Petersfield. A brilliant speech eighteen months afterwards, followed by one or two others of less

interest, made him a lord of trade in 1756, of which board Lord Halifax was then president. With this nobleman, created lord-lieutenant of Ireland, he proceeded thither in 1761 as chief secretary, shone off vividly on two or three occasions, returned to England in about three years, and, though a senator for the remainder of his life, above thirty years, his lips within the house were ever after hermetically sealed to public discussion. While he declined, however, to give the country his advice, he did not hesitate to take its money, having enjoyed the sinecure of Chancellor of the Irish Exchequer from 1763 to 1784, when it was resigned, though not without an equivalent, to Mr. Foster.

His talents were reckoned of the first class, his understanding clear, his judgment sound, particularly, as his friends said, on the first view of a question before his ingenuity had time to fritter it away in useless subtleties and refinements, to which he was prone; his wit pointed, his oratory epigrammatic and antithetical, his conversation easy and agreeable. In composition he was laboriously affected, being a literary fop of the most determined cast: for a stop omitted, a sentence not fully turned, or a word that upon reflection could be amended, were sufficient to occasion the recal of a note to a familiar acquaintance. What he uttered in public partook of the same labour. He was perhaps the only member of either house who ever wrote, got by heart, and rehearsed his speeches in private, previous to their delivery in the House of Commons. One of these, three hours in length, Lord Charlemont knew to have been repeated three times before a friend.

He possessed, however, a very useful faculty,—a clear insight into character, which, after the first introduction, made him cultivate the acquaintance of Mr. Burke, with a desire of attaching him to his own service. The appointment to Ireland opportunely offered for this purpose; it was settled that he should accompany him, partly as a friend, partly in the situation of private secretary, in which, as being perfectly conversant with the local interests, parties, and public characters of the country, his services promised to be of the highest value.

Another account of the origin of his connexion with Lord Halifax's Irish administration has circulated pretty generally. It is stated, that having obtained a recommendation to the Earl of Bath, considered then as a patron of literature, his lordship received him with much politeness, but lamented his inability to do any thing in the way of advancing his interests, from his little connexion with those in power. After some consideration, however, the peer is reported to have added, that he would give him a letter to Lord Bute, though, from their little connexion with each other, not quite satisfied in his own mind of the propriety of taking such a liberty with that nobleman.

To Lord Bute, Mr. Burke is represented to have hastened, when he received from him a nearly similar answer, namely, that he regretted not being enabled to do any thing for him, having resigned his official employments under His Majesty that very morning; but being satisfied Mr. Burke was a man of great genius and acquirements, he would give him a letter to Lord Halifax, then on the point of setting out to

assume the Viceroyalty of Ireland, who would doubtless take care to provide for a man of merit.

Lord Halifax was in turn solicited, and in turn, like his brother peers, he could do nothing—all the departments were unluckily filled up :—one vacancy indeed remained, that of secretary to Mr. Hamilton, the public secretary, which, if it suited Mr. Burke, might probably be procured ; and this appointment finally was given and accepted.

So far report. Truth and error, however, are so jumbled in the story as to occasion some difficulty in detaching the one from the other ; for though some of the circumstances are in themselves true, they are, in the connexion in which they stand here, certainly not true. For instance, it is true that at this time Mr. Burke knew Lord Bath, Lord Halifax, and probably Lord Bute, and might have been recommended to them in the earlier part of his career, as he subsequently was to the Marquis of Rockingham. But nobody intimately acquainted with Mr. Burke's spirit or character, can for a moment believe he would submit to be bandied about from one nobleman to another in the manner here stated, begging for a place. There is besides a glaring anachronism which destroys the credit of the whole. Lord Halifax became Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in 1761, Lord Bute did not resign his employments until the 8th April, 1763, so that the former peer, instead of being on the point of proceeding to his government as Lord Bute is made to say, had in fact returned, or was just about to return, from it. If no other proof were at hand, however, the statement of Lord Charlemont that he introduced Burke to Hamilton, would be sufficient evidence of the fact.

In March, 1671, the appointments of Lord Halifax and his friends were arranged, though the chief persons did not reach the seat of government until the ensuing October. His Lordship displayed so much skill in his administration, as to disarm and neutralize to any purposes of discord, the contending factions by which that country was then, and has been since, often kept in a flame. What share Mr. Burke had in giving private advice, cannot now be known. He himself, it will be seen, speaks of "a long and laborious attendance;" but whatever his suggestions might have been, Hamilton, as his chief, would naturally take the credit of them to himself.

It has been suggested to the writer from very high political authority intimately conversant with the politics and private history of Ireland at this period, that the principal employment of Mr. Burke was, as deputy to Hamilton, to manage the Irish House of Commons; and for this belief there is some ground in the friendship shown him by Primate Stone, then one of the most active "Undertakers," as they were termed, for ruling that country; and from an expression in a letter written at this time, or shortly afterward, and still in existence, by a man in power in Dublin, which, in allusion to Mr. Burke's activity, coarsely and untruly calls him "Hamilton's jackall."

No doubt whatever exists, that his services were put in requisition on all the chief measures brought forward or recommended by government. Of one of these he is believed to have been the author, in conjunction with Lord Kenmare; namely, the project for raising, during a period of great distress

almost amounting to famine, among the peasantry of the west of Ireland, six regiments of Roman Catholics officered by persons of the same persuasion, for the service of Portugal, which however failed through the adverse influence of the great landed proprietors in that quarter of the country. One of his literary productions, or rather state-papers, which at a late period of life was acknowledged either by himself or by Hamilton, it is not clearly remembered which, was the reply of Lord Halifax to the Irish parliament, refusing an augmentation, voted almost unanimously, 26th Feb. 1762, of 4000*l.* per annum to his salary. Of the consideration which he enjoyed, and the esteem which his talents commanded, no better proof need be afforded than the intimate friendships now formed, or renewed, with Mr. Henry Flood, Sir Hercules Langrishe, Mr. Monk Mason, Mr. Pery, afterward Speaker of the Irish House of Commons, and ultimately created a peer, besides the friendship of the Primate and others, men of leading talents and influence in both Houses of Parliament.

The opportunity afforded by this trip of renewing literary, as well as political connexions, which had been interrupted by his stay in England, was not neglected. With Doctor Thomas Wilson, Senior Fellow of the University, Doctor Blundell, Doctor M'Kearney, and others, formerly the directors, or partners, of his studies, it is recorded that he spent an evening or two every week, conversing chiefly on topics connected with letters. Discussing the merits of the Latin historians one evening, the former gentleman is said to have proposed to join him in translating Livy, but this, Mr. Burke, who probably

found he had quite business enough on his hands in the bustle of politics and his other literary occupations, declined. "Good translators," he said, "of Latin authors were rare; and yet, unlike most other rarities, they were not valued as they deserved."

To the south of Ireland, particularly Cork, and its vicinity, he made several excursions in company with his brother, Mr. Garrett Burke; neither were their old and esteemed friends at Ballitore forgotten. Mr. and Mrs. Shackleton, in return, calling at his apartments in Dublin Castle, surprised him on the carpet busily occupied in romping with his two boys, and used to mention the affectionate interest he took in their infantile amusements as a proof of an amiable mind, joined to what the world knew to be a great mind.

Even to a late period of life he delighted in children, amusing himself with what he called "his men in miniature," frequently participating in their juvenile sports, and, while playing with them, perhaps at the same moment instructing their grandfathers, by turning from one to the other to throw out some forcible truth upon human nature, from the scene which their little habits, passions, and contentions afforded. It was no unfrequent thing to see Mr. Burke spinning a top or a tee-totum with the boys who occasionally visited him at Beaconsfield; and the following is an instance of a similar playful and amiable spirit.

A gentleman well known in the literary and political world, who when young amused himself by taking long walks in the vicinity of London, once directed his steps to Harrow, about the time of the

coalition ministry, when on a green in front of a small cottage, he espied an assemblage of such men as are rarely seen together; Mr. Burke, Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan, (the owner of the cottage,) Lord John Townshend, Lord William Russel, and four or five others the most eminent of the Whig party, diverting themselves after what was then customary, an early dinner. Mr. Burke's employment was the most conspicuous; it was in rapidly wheeling a boy (the late Mr. Thomas Sheridan) round the sward in a child's hand-chaise, with an alertness and vivacity that indicated an almost equal enjoyment in the sport with his young companion; who in fact was so much pleased with his adult play-fellow, that he would not let him desist, nor did the orator seem much to desire it, till a summons to horse announced the separation of the party.

In the intervals of business in Dublin, he occasionally visited England on matters connected with his literary pursuits, which were not neglected. In March, 1763, when in Queen Anne Street, he received the reward of his services in his native country in a pension of 300*l.* per annum on the Irish establishment, through the interest, as he said, in writing to a friend in Ireland shortly after, "of Mr. Hamilton and my Lord Primate."

A curious error occurred in the grant of this pension, as appears by the following extract of a letter from Mr. Secretary Hamilton to Sir Robert Wilmot, dated April 14, 1763, for which, and some other documents I am indebted to a gentleman of high political and official rank and admired talents—

"There is a mistake in one of the pensions which

I desire may be rectified at any hazard, as I was the occasion of it.—It is not William Birt who is to have a pension of 300*l.* per annum upon the Primate's list, but Edmund Burke."

This boon, commencing thus somewhat inauspiciously, was to all appearance as inauspiciously terminated; having been enjoyed just for twelve months only, when from the unreasonable and derogatory claims made upon his gratitude, it was thrown up with indignation. The particulars, as related by himself shortly after the transaction in a letter to Mr. Flood, have only lately transpired, and they are too honourable to the writer and too interesting to the reader to be given in other than his own words; they exhibit with what indifference a high and manly spirit relinquished a pecuniary favour, granted to him unconditionally, when its continued acceptance could be construed, however illiberally, and without the least anticipation of such a demand, into an obligation to future servitude—

"My dear Flood,

"I thank you for your kind and most obliging letters; you are a person whose good offices are not snares, and to whom one may venture to be obliged without danger to his honour. As I depend upon your sincerity, so I shall most certainly call upon your friendship, if I should have any thing to do in Ireland; this, however, is not the case at present, at least in any way in which your interposition may be employed with a proper attention to yourself; a point which I shall always very tenderly consider in any application I make to my friends.

" It is very true that there is an eternal rupture between me and Hamilton, which was on my side neither sought nor provoked; for though his conduct in public affairs has been for a long time directly contrary to my opinions, very reproachful to himself, and extremely disgustful to me; and though in private he has not justly fulfilled one of his engagements to me, yet I was so uneasy and awkward at coming to a breach, where I had once a close and intimate friendship, that I continued with a kind of desperate fidelity to adhere to his cause and person; and when I found him greatly disposed to quarrel with me, I used such submissive measures as I never before could prevail upon myself to use to any man.

" The occasion of our difference was not any act whatsoever on my part; it was entirely on his, by a voluntary but most insolent and intolerable demand, amounting to no less than a claim of servitude during the whole course of my life, without leaving me at any time a power either of getting forward with honour, or of retiring with tranquillity. This was really and truly the substance of his demand upon me, to which I need not tell you I refused with some degree of indignation to submit. On this we ceased to see each other, or to correspond a good while before you left London. He then commenced, through the intervention of others, a negociation with me, in which he showed as much of meanness in his proposals as he had done of arrogance in his demands; but as all these proposals were vitiated by the taint of that servitude with which they were all mixed, his negociation came to nothing.

"He grounded these monstrous claims (such as never were before heard of in this country) on that pension which he had procured for me through Colonel Cunninghame, the late Primate, and Lord Halifax, for, through all that series of persons, this paltry business was contrived to pass. Now, though I was sensible that I owed this pension to the good will of the Primate in a great degree, and though, if it had come from Hamilton's pocket, instead of being derived from the Irish treasury, I had earned it by a long and laborious attendance, and might, in any other than that unfortunate connexion, have got a much better thing; yet, to get rid of him completely, and not to carry a memorial of such a person about me, I offered to transmit it to his attorney in trust for him. This offer he thought proper to accept. I beg pardon, my dear Flood, for troubling you so long on a subject which ought not to employ a moment of your thoughts, and never shall again employ a moment of mine."

It is difficult to read this without experiencing mingled feelings of admiration and contempt;—of admiration for the honest independence of principle of one man, contrasted with the unusual degree of tyranny and meanness exhibited by another. For, whether Hamilton wished to give the pension to another, or to exact it from his friend in order to gratify a pitiful resentment, or to bring him to his own terms by distressing him at a time when such a supply could ill be dispensed with, the transaction is extremely discreditable to his memory. An intimate friend of his, the late Mr. Malone, who has

written a short sketch of his life, appears to have thought so, for he makes no allusion whatever to the connexion with Burke.

This quarrel excited considerable notice among the people in power in Dublin, as appears by the following extract of a letter from Mr. Secretary Waite to Sir Robert Wilmot, written above a year afterwards, and for which the writer is indebted to the kindness of the same gentleman already alluded to, whose opportunities and success in research have been highly instructive to the public.

"Dublin Castle, 9 May, 1765.

"We are told here that Mr. Secretary Hamilton and *his genius* Mr. Bourke have quarrelled to such a degree that Mr. Bourke has actually given up his pension of 300*l.* per annum rather than continue obliged to him, and that it is assigned over to a Mr. Jephson, who lives with Mr. Hamilton. Is this true?"

The report that Captain Jephson, afterwards author of the tragedy of Braganza and other works, was his successor in the pension, might have been true, at least for a time; for it appears by the following document that the money was paid for eighteen months afterwards, though not to Mr. Burke. It will be observed also, that it did not cease till after he was connected with office: either from Mr. Hamilton thinking he could no longer retain it with decency under the eye of the person to whom it was properly due, or from Mr. Burke procuring the Marquis of Rockingham peremptorily to strike it out of the list—

"Vice Treasurer's Office, Dublin, 25 Aug., 1824.

"The books of this department have been minutely examined, and it appears that by the King's letter, dated 19 April, 1763, there was granted to Edmund Burke, Esq. during pleasure, a pension of 300*l.* a year from 25th March, 1763, which he assigned on the 10th April, 1764, to Matthew Colthurst * of Chancery-lane, county of Middlesex. —No other assignment appears, nor do any grounds for granting even appear in his Majesty's letters.

"On the 16th December, 1765, it ceased, pursuant to his Majesty's letter of that date, and Lord Lieutenant's warrant thereon, dated 13 January, 1766."

The conduct of Mr. Burke in this transaction must be considered very magnanimous by carrying the point of honour, or, as he emphatically termed it, "desperate fidelity" so far, that the story, though so well calculated to tell to his own advantage, never till recently found its way to the public ear, and this only, it appears, by the letter accidentally being rescued from the flames by one of the executors of the late Mr. Flood, among whose papers it was found. Yet even this honourable reserve was tortured into a handle for party misrepresentation; for it has been eagerly circulated, and with the same perseverance as other equally unfounded rumours, that this very pension, thus surrendered from the most upright motives, was sold by him for a sum of money to pay his debts; adding to the tale, by the same ingenious perversion of

* Mr. Hamilton's attorney.

fact, that it was not surprising he had deserted his last friends, because he had deserted his first! Other rumours in the same spirit, and quite as true, were circulated respecting their union and separation, which, were they not sometimes copied into popular books where they may possible deceive, would be beneath notice.

It has been stated, for instance, that Burke wrote Hamilton's speeches; and the fact of the latter remaining tongue-tied for so many years, in the presence of his old associate, and then professed opponent in politics, gave some countenance to the assertion, though quite unfounded in fact. On their quarrel, Hamilton is said to have upbraided him with having taken him from a garret; when the reply is reported to have been, "Then, Sir, by your own confession it was I that *descended* to you." Some apology is necessary to the reader, for repeating this silly falsehood, told of half a dozen other persons beside; for independent of the utter want of truth in the story or in the reproach, Hamilton had too much of the manners of a gentleman, however deficient in the proper feelings of one, to make such a speech, had the circumstance been true; and Burke too much spirit not to reply, not by a pitiful pun, but by chastising the speaker on the spot.

The fact really was, that no interview took place on the dissolution of their friendship. Along with the inclosure to the attorney alluded to in the letter just quoted, was sent an eloquent valedictory epistle, which Hamilton many years after had the candour to confess, was one of the finest compositions he had ever read, although it is not known that he showed

it to his friends. It is also unknown what were the private engagements he forfeited to Mr. Burke, though the latter retained through life a strong sense of having been unjustly and insolently treated by him on that occasion.

The real grounds of this quarrel verify an observation of the late Bishop O'Beirne, who, when a gentleman of some political consideration in Ireland remarked to him, that though he himself had perfect confidence in Burke's strict principle and honour upon all occasions, yet others, who did not know him so well, were less inclined to give him credit for some unexplained parts of his conduct; "Believe me," said the Bishop, "if there be an obscure point in the life or conduct of Edmund Burke, the moment the explanation arrives, it will be found to redound to his honour."

The conclusion of Mr. Burke's letter to Mr. Flood, as it exhibits the near view of public affairs, which he enjoyed even at this time, and relates some curious particulars of the ministry, is worthy of preservation—

"To your inquiries concerning some propositions in a certain assembly, of a nature injurious to Ireland, since your departure.—I know nothing of that kind, except one attempt made by a Mr. Shiffner, to lessen the number of the ports of entry in Britain and Ireland, allowed for the trade of wool and woollen yarn of the growth of the latter country. This attempt was grounded on the decrease of the import of those commodities from Ireland, which they rashly attributed to the great facility of the

illicit transport of wool from Ireland to France, by the indulgence of a number of ports. This idea, founded in an ignorance of the nature of the Irish trade, had weight with some persons, but the decreased import of Irish wool and yarn, being accounted for upon true and rational principles, in a short memorial delivered to Mr. Townshend, he saw at once into it with his usual sagacity; and he has silenced the complaints at least for this session. Nothing else was done or meant that I could discover, though I have not been inattentive; and I am not without good hopes that the menaces in the beginning of the session will end as they began, only in idle and imprudent words. At least there is a strong probability that new men will come in, and not improbably with new ideas.

"At this very instant, the causes productive of such a change are strongly at work. The Regency Bill has shown such want of concert, and want of capacity in the ministers, such an inattention to the honour of the Crown, if not such a design *against* it, such imposition and surprise upon the King, and such a misrepresentation of the disposition of Parliament to the Sovereign, that there is no doubt that there is a fixed resolution to get rid of them all (unless perhaps of Grenville); but principally of the Duke of Bedford; so that you will have much more reason to be surprised to find the ministry standing by the end of next week, than to hear of their entire removal. Nothing but an intractable temper in your friend Pitt can prevent a most admirable and lasting system from being put

together, and this crisis will show whether pride * or patriotism be predominant in his character; for you may be assured, he has it now in his power to come into the service of his country upon any plan of politics he may choose to dictate, with great and honourable terms to himself and to every friend he has in the world, and with such a strength of power as will be equal to every thing, but absolute despotism over the king and kingdom. A few days will show whether he will take this part, or that of continuing on his back at Hayes talking fustian, excluded from all ministerial and incapable of all parliamentary service. For his gout is worse than ever, but his pride may disable him more than his gout. These matters so fill our imaginations here, that with our mob of 6 or 7000 weavers, who pursue the Ministry, and do not leave them quiet or safe in their own houses, we have little to think of other things.

" I will send you the new edition of Swift's post-

* *Pride*, or some other passion, did, it seems, on this occasion, prevail over *patriotism* in the mind of Mr. Pitt; for though the Duke of Cumberland, by order of the King, waited upon him at Hayes (19th May) the very day after this letter was written, with nearly a *carte blanche* for the formation of a Ministry, he flatly refused. His Majesty was necessarily compelled to keep his then Ministers, who displayed no little presumption, if not arrogance, towards him, in the belief that they could not readily be replaced. This state of things, however, could not long continue; and by Royal command, the Duke two months afterwards brought Lord Rockingham into office. *See Horace Walpole's Letters to Lord Hertford, 4to.* 1825, *p.* 223. The early and accurate intelligence which Mr. Burke, though wholly unconnected with public life, gained of these proceedings, proves the nature of the society he lived in.

humous works. I doubt you can hardly read this hand; but it is very late. Mrs. Burke has been ill and recovers but slowly; she desires her respects to you and Lady Frances. Iulus is much obliged to you. Will. Bourke always remembers you with affection, and so does my dear Flood. Your most affectionate humble servant,

"18th May, 1765. "E. BURKE.

"Pray remember me to Langrishe, and to Leland and Bowden. Dr. Nugent desires his compliments to you, in the strongest manner; he has conceived a very high esteem for you."

Previous to this rupture with Hamilton, in the autumn of 1763, and in the spring of 1764, Mr. Burke visited Dublin again, on some expectations held out by the Earl of Northumberland, then Lord Lieutenant; and with Mrs. Burke and his son made a short stay at Ballitore, returning to Queen Anne-street, in June. His brother Richard, several months previous to this, had procured the collectorship of the Grenadas.

It was about this period that a trifling circumstance, occurring in a public exhibition, impressed those who were present and knew him (among whom was the relater of the following anecdote) with a feeling of his humanity and virtue, which, on subsequent occasions, in his arduous career, was often recalled to mind, and mentioned to his honor.

"In the year 1762, one Johnson, an Irishman by birth, exhibited many feats of activity in horsemanship, and was, I believe, the first public performer in that line in and about London. He was an

active, clever fellow in his way, and seemed to me to be patronized by Mr. Burke, then said to be a student of the Middle Temple, and by his friend Mr. Netterville, and Mr. Nugent the merchant; for I was seldom there without seeing this party, amongst whom Richard Burke sometimes appeared.

"The great favourite of the company was a beautiful black horse. Whenever Johnson wanted him, he gave three smacks of his whip, and the docile creature came out of his stable and stood by his side; he then ran about the ring until another sound of the whip brought him again to his master. In one unlucky round he disobeyed, and his master's whip often sounded in vain. When at length he stopped, Johnson by a violent blow between the ears, felled him to the ground, and the creature lay for some minutes as if expiring. Mr. Burke broke from the circle, and running directly up to Johnson, vehemently exclaimed, 'You scoundrel! I have a mind to knock you down!' and he would I believe have done so, if Mr. Netterville had not reached him and interposed. Johnson had then leisure to make what apology he pleased, and thus the matter ended;—but I shall never forget the impression of awe and admiration made upon myself and others by the solemn passion with which Mr. Burke uttered this otherwise coarse reproof. Though the circle was immediately broken, all kept a respectful distance; perhaps this was the first time he had ever produced an effect upon an audience. I must be excused for comparing great things with small; but when I first heard him in the House of Com-

mons pouring out a torrent of indignation against cruelty and corruption, I was reminded, after an interval of many years, of the champion of the poor black horse."

While in Dublin towards the end of 1763, Edmund received a letter from his old friend Dr. Sleigh, of Cork, recommending to his attention a friendless son of genius, who had proceeded thence to the metropolis to exhibit a picture, of which in his native city no sufficient judgment could be formed. This was Barry, the celebrated painter. Mr. Burke saw him frequently, examined and praised his picture, inquired into his views and future prospects, and, desirous to try his powers of mind, broached an argument upon a question of taste rather ingenious than solid, which the other boldly opposed; quoting in support of his opinion, and ignorant as it seems of the real author, a passage from the Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful. Mr. Burke affecting to contend that this was a poor performance and no authority, considerable discussion ensued, until at length Barry becoming very angry, his new acquaintance, to appease his indignation, confessed himself to be the writer, when the irritable but enthusiastic painter, springing from his seat, ran and embraced him; and as a more unequivocal proof of admiration for the volume in dispute, produced a copy of it, which he had transcribed with his own hand.

The kindness of Mr. Burke did not stop at mere acquaintance and advice; for, though possessing but slender means himself, and with quite sufficient claims upon them, he had too much goodness of

heart, and too sincere sympathy with unfriended talents, to see them sink into hopeless neglect and poverty without at least giving them a chance for reward. No opportunities for improvement existing in Dublin, he offered the artist a passage to England with Mr. Richard Burke, just then returned from the West Indies, received him at his house in Queen Anne-street, introduced him to the principal artists, and procured employment for him to copy pictures under Athenian Stuart, until a favourable change in his own circumstances enabled him to do still more.

Whenever Parliament was sitting, Mr. Burke was observed to be a frequent attendant in the gallery, storing up those practical observations on public business and debate, soon to be drawn forth for active use. Most of his hours of study, as he frequently said afterwards, were devoted to a minute acquaintance with the principles and workings of the British Constitution. The next object in his eyes was our commerce; these alone, he said, had made us what we were—a free and a great nation; and these he had spared no time, no labour, no sacrifice, thoroughly to understand, and for these alone had well earned his subsequent pension before he put his foot in the House of Commons. It is certain that he was the first who rendered the principles and many of the details of commerce generally intelligible in that assembly. Dr. Johnson was proud to be told a few years afterward, by an excellent judge of the matter, the 'all knowing Jackson,' as he was called, that there was more good sense about trade in the account of his journey to the

Western Islands of Scotland, than would be heard for a whole year in Parliament, except from Burke.

In the discussions to which the peace and the proceedings of the Grenville Ministry gave rise, he is said to have taken a considerable share; and some letters which excited considerable notice, under the signature of Anti-Sejanus, were attributed to his pen. This may be doubted, or in fact denied. They might have been Mr. William Burke's; but Edmund, in all the Annual Registers up to the period of his connexion with the Rockingham Administration, preserves a rigid impartiality, strongly reprobating the licentiousness of the press on both sides, and complaining (1764) that "character no longer depended on the tenor of a man's life and actions; it was entirely determined by the party he had taken."

Previous to this time, it has been said, and never denied, that he had disciplined himself in public speaking at the famous debating society, known by the name of the "Robin Hood." Such indeed was then the custom among law-students and others intended for public life; and a story is told of the future orator having commonly to encounter an opponent whom nobody else could overcome; this person, it seems, was discovered to be a baker, whom Goldsmith, who had heard him several times speak, once characterized as being "meant by nature for a Lord Chancellor." Mr. Murphy had some faint recollection of the anecdote. Tradesmen form no inconsiderable part of such assemblies; and as unlettered minds often think originally, though crudely, it may not be useless to one

better informed, thus to seek exercise for its powers by beating down their errors. A circumstance almost precisely similar occurred to the late celebrated Mr. Curran, when keeping his terms in London, and is related in his memoirs by his son.

A suggestion of Mr. Reynolds to Mr. Burke, between whom a close friendship existed, cemented by admiration of each other's talents and private virtues, gave birth in 1764 to the famous Literary Club, in imitation of the social meetings of the wits of the preceding age. No class of persons, perhaps, require them more than those who, having little to enliven the solitary drudgery of the day, gladly fly to familiar converse in the evening with congenial minds. Here the wise may mix with the wise, not indeed to preach up wisdom, but to forget the follies of others in displaying some of their own. Here also were performed, without venting that undue personal animosity and unmeasured abuse of the criticism of our day, those offices to literature now undertaken by the leading reviews, in settling the claims of new books and authors. Literary enmities were then less general, perhaps, in consequence of men of jarring opinions and principles being brought more frequently together, and who found in the amenities of social intercourse something to soften the asperities of controversy. Authors, at present, associate more with the world and less with each other; but it may be doubted whether they or the public have gained by the exchange.

Among those of the club whom Mr. Burke much esteemed, and whose genius and foibles were

alternately sources of admiration and amusement, was Goldsmith. They had entered Trinity College within two months of each other; the former, as related, in April, the latter in June, 1744; and though not then particularly acquainted, remembered each other afterwards as being known in the University for the possession of talents, rather than for exerting them. Occasional meetings at Dodsley's renewed the acquaintance, about 1758; and in the Annual Register for the following year, his *Inquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe*, is noticed with approbation, as were all his subsequent writings.

With the exception of a little vanity, and a little jealousy, which however from the manner they were shown excited rather laughter than anger, it was difficult to know Goldsmith without liking him, even if the warm regards of Burke, Johnson, and Reynolds were not alone a sufficient stamp of the sterling value of any man. Humane in disposition, generous to imprudence, careless of his own interests, a chaste and elegant writer who advocated the interests of religion and morals, and who combined with his exhortations as much of practical benevolence as falls to the lot of most men, he was worthy of such friends; at once a rival of their fame and of their virtues. An author by profession, he was characterized by the imprudencies often attendant upon genius. He thought not of the morrow; the "heaviest of metals" was so light in his estimation as to be carelessly parted with, though laboriously earned. He and poverty had been so long acquainted, that even when an opportunity offered for

casting her off by the success of his pen, they knew not how to separate. He lived too much in pecuniary difficulties, and he died so.

During the term of his literary life, which comprised no more than 16 years, he wrote much and always well, but chiefly of that class of productions intended rather as sacrifices to necessity than to inclination. There is enough indeed left behind him for fame, but much less than for our national glory and individual pleasure, every reader of taste desires. His plays are good; his poems, novels, and essays, admirable: his histories, as far as they go, infinitely superior to any others of the same abbreviated description. Some persons, on account of the small number of his original works, have been inclined to attribute to him poverty of genius, forgetting his daily wants and the shortness of his career; but, in fact, no writer of the age displayed more fertility and variety on any subject to which he chose to apply the powers of his mind. And it should also be remembered that he had constantly to write for present bread before he could think of contingent reputation; for, alas! the brain with all its noble and delightful thoughts and aspirations must still seek its support from the more grovelling stomach. He died too at 46, an age at which Johnson was little more than beginning to become known to the public, and after which that great writer completed several of those works which render him the pride of our nation. Had poor Goldsmith lived to attain an equally venerable term of years, there is no doubt, both from his necessities and thirst for distinction, that the national literature would have been enriched much more than it is, by the labours of his pen.

CHAPTER IV.

Appointed Private Secretary to the Marquis of Rockingham—Anecdote of the Duke of Newcastle—Mr. Burke's Account of the State of Parties and Politics—Success in Parliament—Dismission of the Ministry—Short Account of a short Administration—Visit to Ireland—Anecdotes—His Memory—Gregories—Pamphlet in Reply to Mr. Grenville—Junius—Letters to Barry.

THE moment at length arrived when Mr. Burke gained that opening into public life, which nature and the train of his studies had so eminently qualified him to fill.

Mr. George Grenville's Administration had become unpopular by the proceedings against Mr. Wilkes, by the means resorted to for increasing the revenue, and the supposed secret influence of Lord Bute, when the omission of the Princess Dowager of Wales's name in the Regency Bill then framed on the first paroxysm of that malady which subsequently so much afflicted the king, threw it out, as Mr. Burke, in the letter already quoted, had clearly predicted two months before. Mr. Pitt was then applied to in vain; that imperious, though able minister, scarcely permitting his Majesty to have a voice in the formation of his own councils. The Duke of Cumberland, much esteemed for his good sense and popular deportment, now undertook the formation of a ministry; and, by his express command, and through him, by the direct desire of the King, a

division of the Whigs entered into office under the Marquis of Rockingham.

The body, among whom this nobleman now took the lead, though comprising the chief of the aristocracy of the country, presented at this moment, and for several years afterwards, an unstable and heterogeneous compound of repelling particles. It was split into as many sections as a marching regiment on the parade; but having no other principle of a military body, exhibited only the irregular energy, when it showed any energy at all, of an undisciplined mob; a mass of moral quicksilver without any fixed point of adhesion; the cuttings and parings of all opinions, jumbled into a crude, vacillating, unintelligible whiggism; most of the members being, in fact, a kind of neutral-ground men, so wavering, so undecided, so uncertain in their support, as almost to justify the wish of Mr. Burke, that "he hoped to God the race was extinct."

The Marquis, the Duke of Newcastle, and their friends, forming the main division of the party, deemed themselves sound Whigs; the Duke of Bedford professed to be a Whig; the Duke of Grafton called himself a Whig; Mr. George Grenville thought himself a Whig; and Mr. Pitt, if he hung aloof from the name of Whig, was so near to it in substance, that none but himself could distinguish the difference. Each of these had various shades of opinion, and some of their followers, as it proved, no opinions at all; while several, with Charles Townshend, seemed so eager for place, or unsteady in principle, as to be ready, upon the summons, to adopt or sur-

render any opinions whatever. Statesmen out of office are often in the unlucky predicament of being unable to explain to the satisfaction of the people, their hair's-breadth differences of sentiment with those who are in; and when they happen to succeed, do not always get as much credit as they expect for utility, novelty, or sincerity, in their views.

Lord Rockingham, doomed to be a leader of short-lived administrations, commanded general respect for the qualities of his heart and manners. He was not a great man, only perhaps because he already enjoyed the chief of the fruits of political greatness—almost the highest rank and the amplest fortune. But were there an order of statesmen set apart from the general class, distinguished for clear views, unwavering integrity, for a sound understanding and an upright mind, who aimed at no brilliancy, and were superior to all duplicity or trick, even to promote a favourite purpose, he would have stood at the head of the list. His knowledge and acquirements were all substantial. He had much for use, though but little for display. His rank in life enabling him to take an enlarged view of the political horizon, he observed keenly, and expressed himself in public, on most occasions, wisely and temperately. Never touching on the extremes of timidity or rashness, he possessed the useful art of knowing exactly how far to go, on party occasions, and where to stop. Whoever had him for an opponent had an honourable one, whom, if he could not convince, he could scarcely disesteem; and as a minister, none could have more unequivocally at heart the good of his country.

Through the recommendation of several friends, particularly Mr. Fitzherbert, Mr. Burke received the appointment of private secretary to this nobleman, July 17, 1765, just a week after the latter had been nominated to the head of the Treasury. "The British dominions," says a writer who knew most of the political characters of the time, "did not furnish a more able and fit person for that important and confidential situation;—the only man since the days of Cicero who has united the talents of speaking and writing with irresistible force and elegance."

His own account of this event given nine years afterwards, was stated with much modesty. "In the year sixty-five, being in a very private station, far enough from any line of business, and not having the honour of a seat in this house, it was my fortune, unknowing and unknown to the then ministry, by the intervention of a common friend, to become connected with a very noble person, and at the head of the Treasury department. It was indeed in a situation of little rank and no consequence, suitable to the mediocrity of my talents and pretensions. But a situation near enough to enable me to see, as well as others, what was going on; and I did see in that noble person such sound principles, such an enlargement of mind, such clear and sagacious sense, and such unshaken fortitude, as have bound me, as well as others much better than me, by an inviolable attachment to him from that time forward."

By those who knew him intimately he was undoubtedly deemed a great acquisition to the Ministry; he, however, had not the same high opi-

nion of his situation, having afterwards said, that of all the members of the party at that time, he had the least sanguine hopes of it as a road to power.

The appointment had been scarcely gained, when misconception or enmity threatened to fling him back once more to a private station. No sooner was it known to the Duke of Newcastle, who had accepted the seals, than he waited upon the Marquis, over whom he had some influence, and told him that he had unwarily taken into his service a man of dangerous principles, a Papist, and a Jacobite. The statement was immediately communicated, in some alarm, to the accused. The latter at once admitted that several of his connexions were Roman Catholics, but disclaimed that persuasion for himself and all the members of his own family, as well as every other part of the charge; and further, that his education and conduct while at Trinity College, and the tenor of his life after quitting it, were known to several mutual acquaintance, who were at hand, and might be referred to, to disprove the calumny.

The Marquis saw so much frankness in the explanation, that he readily declared himself satisfied, but not so his independent secretary. He said it was impossible they could longer continue in confidential communication; for that the impression his Lordship had received would imperceptibly produce reserve and suspicion, embarrassing to public business, and so unpleasant to the subject of them, that nothing on earth should induce him to remain in such a situation.

Struck with this further instance of openness

and spirit, the Marquis instantly assured him, that so far from any bad impression remaining on his mind, his manly conduct had obliterated every scruple, and that if for nothing but what had occurred on that occasion, he should ever esteem and place in him the fullest confidence,—a promise which he faithfully performed. "Neither," adds Lord Charlemont, the relator of the anecdote, and who personally knew the circumstances, "had he at any time, or his friends after his death, the least reason to repent of that confidence; Burke having ever acted toward him with the most inviolate faith and affection, and towards his surviving friends with a constant and disinterested fidelity, which was proof against his own indigent circumstances and the magnificent offers of those in power."

To this, as well as some other attempts to prejudice him in the opinion of his patron, he alludes in the following letter to his uncle, who, in a serious difficulty in which some of his relations were accidentally involved, had applied to him to use his influence, from being so near to the fountain of power, to extricate them. His reasons for declining to interfere show his judgment and good sense. But in Ireland, in those days, there was an unhappy opinion not even now eradicated, that *interest* could always overpower *law*.—The postscript affords another illustration of his considerate benevolence even in the most trifling matters—

"My dear Sir,

"Since I heard from you, our little party in Queen Anne Street has been reinforced by a person

who loves you as well as I do—poor Richard of Grenada.* He left that island in no very good state of health, and after a great deal of vexation from, but also after a great and perfect triumph over, his enemies; a set of the greatest villains that ever existed. He has leave of absence for six months; and is I think already as completely re-established in health, strength, and spirits, as we could wish. We all join in giving you joy on the occasion of our friend Katty's (q. Kitty's?) match; and only wish her that she may be as happy in a husband as her mother was; and, much as we regard her, we cannot wish her better. Pray remember our hearty congratulations to the young couple.

"I am sincerely concerned for the match that Garret Atty was so unfortunate as to make; and did from the beginning expect no better issue of it, in a county circumstanced as ours is; assure my uncle that there is no one step on earth in my power that I would not gladly take to give ease to his mind, which must be cruelly agitated; I most sincerely pity him; but, I believe, when he reflects *how newly and almost as a stranger I am come about* (among?) *these people, and knows the many industrious endeavours which malice and envy* (very unprovoked indeed) *have used to ruin me,* he will see that so early a request to suspend the operation of the laws, upon my bare word, against the finding

* His brother. A copy of this letter (lately published in a well-conducted periodical work) taken a long time ago, lies among the papers of a gentleman, a relative of Mr. Burke, to whom the writer of these volumes is under obligations for much other valuable information.

of a Jury of the greatest county of the kingdom, and that upon the most unpopular point in the world, could have no other effect than to do me infinite prejudice, without the least possibility of succeeding in the object I aimed at. This I am sure your own good sense will point out to both of you, and will satisfy my uncle that no vain and timorous delicacy, but the real conviction I have of the inefficacy of the application with regard to him, prevents my taking a warm and active part in this affair * * * * *.

"It is now time for me to make some inquiry about my young friend, your grandson, Ned.* I have really been so hurried with the many changes which have happened in my affairs, and those of my friends for some time past, that I have not had leisure to inquire much about him. My brother and I will consult some proper method of having him sent to sea under honest and good-natured management; give me some account of him, and whether you still continue of opinion that this way of life will be advisable for him. If your sentiments are the same they formerly were upon this article, I hope you had an eye to the sea in the education he has since had; we may in a short time compleat it here.

"You cannot think how happy you would make us by writing often, and being as particular as you can about any thing that concerns you. Thank my Cousin Garret for his kind concern in my affairs: whenever he has any account to make up, he will settle it with you; by this you have my letter of attorney empowering you to act for me. If you

* The present Admiral Sir Edmund Nagle.

should see Counsellor Murphy and the Colonel, make my hearty compliments to them. Once more I beg to hear speedily from you. Jane and Dick are truly yours; so is my dear uncle, your affectionate friend. "E. BURKE.

"Oct. 14, 1765.

"I saw Dick Hennessy here some time ago; his family is well; his wife ready to fall to pieces. I recollect that Garrett * in his life-time used to allow to a poor neighbour of yours some malt, or some such small present at Christmas; let it be continued to him, and charge it to my account. Jenny intended as much more. Let him have it either in that way or any other which he may like better; and if poor Philpot be alive, you will direct that he should have a dozen of port or some good strong wine at Christmas, and now and then a bottle or two before that time. You will advance the money to Cousin Garrett, and place it to my account. Until they can be had to Dublin, be so good to be very careful of the papers in your hands."

By an arrangement with Lord Verney he came immediately into Parliament as Member for Wendover in Buckinghamshire, his Lordship, in return, being Gazetted a Privy-Councillor; and it may be remarked, that though the principal appointments under the Ministry, and among others that of the private secretaries, are mentioned in the Annual Register of the year, his own name seems studiously omitted. William Burke soon afterwards became Under Secretary of State to General Conway, and

* His elder brother.

Member for Bedwin in Wiltshire; sitting for the latter until the general election in 1774.

Seldom perhaps did a ministry succeed to office under more discouraging circumstances than that under the Marquis of Rockingham. Though of unobjectionable reputation, several of the members were young in office; they were scarcely popular, from being supposed to stand in the way of Mr. Pitt; they were not favourites at Court, on account of holding some principles at variance with those who were, perhaps invidiously, called the interior cabinet, or King's friends; neither were they sufficiently united among themselves, either from previous concert or personal attachments to calculate upon stability, particularly after the death of the Duke of Cumberland, who expired suddenly at a meeting held to arrange some of the business of the session, on the 31st October, 1765.

In America, the discontents were become truly alarming, in consequence of the Stamp Act passed by Mr. George Grenville the preceding February, after being opposed only by a minority of forty in the House of Commons, and without either debate, division, or protest, in the Lords, of so little consequence was the matter deemed.

At home, the manufacturers and merchants were incensed at restrictions whice threatened to destroy their trade. The country gentlemen of England however wanted a productive revenue pouring into the English Exchequer, to relieve themselves from the burdens arising from the late war; and the colonies insisted that such revenue they could not, and would not, afford. One strong and popular party in Parlia-

ment declared it treason to the principles of the Constitution to tax America without her own consent. Another, stronger in numbers and in influence, declared it equally treason to the Crown and Legislature to surrender the right of taxation; and the latter opinion eventually proved to be the prevailing one in the country.

The best exposition extant of the state of parties at this period is from the pen of Mr. Burke himself; and on this account, as well as its being a remarkable æra both in his life and in the history of the country, it is given here. But it is still more remarkable as evincing his moderation as an historian; for though known in Parliament always as a strong partisan, yet in writing anonymously he usually wrote impartially; a degree of candour rarely imitated by literary men, who, however moderate in tone, in their avowed productions, often give loose to violent party zeal, where no responsibility is incurred. To the honour of his moderation therefore be it remembered, that the following was written when suffering under a sense of injury by the belief that his friends and himself had been ejected from office without any just or even assigned cause—

"At the conclusion of our last volume,* we saw the nation involved in the most distressful circumstances that could well be imagined; our manufacturers at a stand, commerce almost totally annihilated, provisions extravagantly dear, and a numerous populace unemployed, without the means of procuring a livelihood. Such, and so gloomy was the prospect that opened at home upon us, along with

* Annual Register.

the year; nor did the view become more pleasing by extending it across the Atlantic, where the colonies exhibited nothing but scenes of anarchy and confusion, where licentiousness was carried almost to the highest pitch that it possibly could admit, without assuming another name; whilst the profligate and abandoned (as is usually the case in civil commotions) under the specious pretext and mask of liberty and the common cause, gave a loose to their own unruly passions, and committed all those exorbitances which the vulgar are so prone to, when under any pretence they are allowed to assemble in bodies, and through any relaxation of the laws, they have not the fears of immediate punishment upon them. We have before observed, that those of an higher rank amongst them did not take any pains to allay the ferment; it is probable that many of the more serious of them condemned in their minds several acts that were committed, but did not think proper to damp a spirit, which, however irregularly or improperly exerted, they, perhaps, at that time, thought it conducive to their designs to keep alive.

"But though a violent resentment supported the spirit of the colonists, they could not but sensibly feel the inconveniencies which an entire stoppage of trade must occasion among a people who had hitherto subsisted by commerce.

"However, their warehouses were full of British goods, for which they had not paid; and the many resources of so vast an extent of country, abounding in the most essential articles of life, prevented them from feeling so much immediate distress as our own manufacturers and labouring poor at home.

"It must be observed, that the enormous sums owing to our merchants, in the colonies, added greatly to the difficulties the public were under, and severely afflicted the trading and manufacturing part of the community. These debts, amounting to several millions sterling, the Americans absolutely refused to pay, pleading in excuse their utter inability, which plea, it appears, the merchants admitted to be reasonable.

"As the nation was never, perhaps, in a more critical situation, so, of consequence, no administration ever had greater difficulties to encounter than the new one. They were under an immediate necessity of enforcing the stamp-act by fire and sword, or else of moving its immediate repeal in Parliament. In the former case, though there was no doubt of the ability of Great Britain to crush, or even extirpate the colonies,* yet such decision, if not looked upon as absolute suicide, must, at least, be considered as making use of one arm to cut off the other.

"Fatal were the consequences, which it was foreseen and foretold would attend such an attempt; and it was obvious, that if such consequences should ensue, the first framers and promoters of the obnoxious laws, would have been entirely forgot in the general odium and execration, which would have fallen solely upon the Ministers, who, by enforcing such ruinous measures, had wrought the destruction of their country.

"On the other hand, if the act should be repealed, a colourable appearance was not wanting to charge them with sacrificing the dignity of the crown, toge-

* On this point Mr. Burke soon changed his opinion.

ther with the honour and interest of the nation to their own irresolution, or else to a causeless animosity which it would be said they bore to their predecessors, and a blind opposition to all their measures.

"The loss of their illustrious friend and patron, the Duke of Cumberland, seemed, at this period, to be truly critical to the Ministry; his influence, his authority, his good sense, his patriotism, and the high regard the public held him in, would have added greatly to their strength and security.

"Thus situated, they had an opposition to encounter, consisting of gentlemen, several of whom had held the first employments in the kingdom, and who, for abilities, experience, knowledge of business, property, and connexions, were very reputable, and therefore truly formidable.

"Some of these gentlemen seemed obliged in honour, as well as through opinion, and a spirit of opposition, to embark warmly in vindication and support of measures which had originally been their own; for which it may be supposed they had the natural partiality of a parent, and in defence of which they were determined to dispute every inch of ground with the Ministry. Some also joined them through principle.

"They thought that the insolence of the Americans deserved chastisement, where otherwise, the hardship of their circumstances might merit relief. Others there were who gave themselves no trouble as to the rectitude of the American taxation, but who would have been very glad that their own burthens at home could be at all lightened, by any sums, that could be drawn in any manner, out of the

pockets of the colonists; and, in general, it may be supposed that the lovers and assertors of high prerogative naturally chimed in with the rest, upon their own principles. There were not a few also who first kept aloof from, and in due time declared against the Ministry, upon some symptoms which appeared early, of their wanting that countenance which, as it hath been favourable or adverse, has determined the good or ill-fortune of the several successive systems of administration for some years past. This part of the opposition was, for very obvious reasons, by much the most dangerous.

"To balance this powerful opposition, the administration consisted of gentlemen, who, though many of them were young in office, were yet extremely high in estimation; whose characters were clear, whose integrity was far above suspicion, and whose abilities seemed to grow with the difficulties of the business they were engaged in; their constant adherence also to the cause of liberty had procured them the confidence and good will of the public, both of which they enjoyed in a very eminent degree. They had, besides, some other advantages, as they were not bound to the support of measures at all events, merely because they had planned or advised them; so they could weigh matters with coolness and impartiality, and judge without prejudice or passion; at least they had the happiness not to be obliged to act systematically wrong.

"They appear, accordingly, to have avoided, as well as in matters so critical, perhaps, they could be avoided, the two extremes; in one, which it was apprehended they must inevitably have struck, they

neither precipitated affairs in America by the rashness of their councils, nor did they sacrifice the dignity of the crown or nation by irresolution or weakness; and the firmness, as well as temper, which appeared in their dispatches to the different governors, when examined by the House, did them the greatest honour. By preserving this medium, by suspending their own judgment in a matter of so great importance, till they had obtained that of the representatives of the nation, they still left it in the power of the supreme legislature to use healing measures, and did not urge their fellow-subjects, through desperation, to the committal of such acts as could not be forgiven.

"Notwithstanding the prudence of this conduct, it was severely animadverted on by the opposite party. These gentlemen would have the most coercive means made use of, for forcing the new laws and regulations, in which themselves had so great a share, fully sensible of the disgrace that must be reflected on them by a repeal; it is not unnatural to suppose that they wished to see the executive power so deeply engaged before the meeting of parliament, that the legislature could not then in honour recede from the support of it. Upon this principle, the plan of moderation that had been adopted, was opposed with the greatest acrimony, and the severest invectives pointed at administration, for not having immediately employed troops and ships of war to enforce the laws in such a manner, as the outrageousness of the resistance, and the importance of the authority which was resisted, did, as they asserted, indispensably require.

"In the mean time, the American affairs were become a general subject of discussion, and numberless pamphlets were wrote on both sides of the question; in general, both sides were guilty of the same fault, though in the most opposite extremes; the advocates for the colonies carried the idea of liberty to the highest pitch of enthusiasm, while their antagonists seemed to imagine, that a person forfeited every birthright and privilege of an Englishman by going to live in America. They both also proved a great deal too much, while the former seemed to consider the colonies rather as independent states, in a sort of equal alliance with the mother country, than as dominions depending upon and belonging to her; they furnished the strongest reasons why that irregular spirit of enthusiasm should be timely checked, by making them sensible of their dependence.

"On the other hand, the enemies of the colonies, by exaggerating their power, opulence, and popularity, sufficiently proved the necessity of treating them with tenderness, as if their calculations were allowed to be half founded, it must be impossible to retain them long in subjection by any other means.

"In this situation were affairs (17th Dec.) when the Parliament met in the latter end of the year 1765. Particular notice was taken from the throne of the importance of the matters which had occurred in North America, and which were given as a reason for assembling the two houses sooner than was intended, that they might have an opportunity to issue the necessary writs on the many vacancies that had happened since the last session, and proceed im-

mediately after the recess, to the consideration of the weighty matters that should then be laid before them, for which purpose the fullest accounts of the American affairs should be prepared for their inspection. Most of the friends to administration had vacated their seats in consequence of the late changes, so that by death and promotions, there were forty one seats now vacant. Some thought it would be ungenerous to make any strictures upon the conduct of the ministers, till they should be in a situation to vindicate or explain it, in their proper persons as members of the house: it appears, however, that others were of a contrary opinion. An Address having been resolved in answer to the king's speech, a motion was made by the opposition, that his Majesty might be addressed to give orders, that copies of all letters, papers, orders, or instructions, sent from the Secretary of State's office, or the other principal departments, to the governors and officers of the crown in North America, together with copies of all answers thereto, and of all other papers relative to the late disturbance there, to the execution of the stamp duty, to the enforcing of the law, and to the quelling of riotous and tumultuous disorders, should be laid before the House. This motion seemed the more extraordinary, as it had been declared from the throne, that the fullest accounts of these affairs should be laid before Parliament.

"The House probably thought the proposition not very decent with regard to the crown, nor candid with regard to the Ministry, in their situation at that time; so that on a sharp debate, the previous

question being put, it was carried in the negative by a majority of 70 to 35. The House having then issued the necessary writs, adjourned for the holidays."

With so many irreconcileable interests and opinions to contend, Ministry opened the session for business on the 14th January, 1766, when Mr. Burke seized the first opportunity of taking an active part in the discussion concerning America. The details are not otherwise known than from a few notes taken by Lord Charlemont. Mr. Pitt, who professed to have no specific objection to the Ministry, though he would not give them his confidence, immediately followed Mr. Burke in the debate, and complimented him by observing, "that the young member had proved a very able advocate; he had himself intended to enter at length into the details, but he had been anticipated with so much ingenuity and eloquence, that there was little left for him to say; he congratulated him on his success, and his friends on the value of the acquisition they had made." Many of the acquaintance of Mr. Burke were in the gallery purposely to witness this first display of his powers, one of whom was Mr. Murphy; and they all, on his quitting the house, crowded round him, expressing the greatest pleasure at the result, the praise of Mr. Pitt being of itself, in the general opinion, a passport to fame. After this he spoke frequently and at length, and again received some unusual compliments; the highest estimate being formed of his powers as a speaker.

Richard Burke, writing to Barry the painter, says, 11th February, a month after the opening of the session, "Your friend (Edmund Burke) has not only spoke, but he has spoke almost every day; as to how I shall leave you to guess, only saying that to a reputation not mean before, he has added more than the most sanguine of his friends could have imagined. He has gained prodigious applause from the public, and compliments of the most flattering kind from particulars; it will add to what I know you already feel on this occasion to be told, that amongst the latter was one from Mr. Pitt, who paid it to him in the house in the most obliging manner, and in the strongest terms."

A member of the club* who had treated him rudely on one occasion in consequence of being foiled in a literary discussion, and had found it convenient to absent himself, from the coolness with which he was on this account afterwards received by the other members, expressing some surprise at his elevation, Johnson as promptly as prophetically replied, "Sir, there is no wonder at all. We who know Mr. Burke, know that he will be one of the first men in the country." Writing soon afterward, March 9th, 1766, to Mr. Langton, Johnson said,

* Sir John Hawkins; known for his Life of Johnson and History of Music, possessed of some literary anecdote, but of no genius, and of a most unamiable character. Some idea of his disposition and temper may be formed from the fact, that for his discomfiture on the occasion alluded to above, he entertained through life a rooted aversion to Mr. Burke, his family, and even to some of his friends, among whom was Mr. Dyer, of whom more will be said hereafter; and occasionally indulged in dark insinuations against them all as men of "desperate fortunes."

"We have the loss of Burke's company since he has been engaged in public business, in which he has gained more reputation than perhaps any man at his first appearance ever gained before. He made two speeches in the House for repealing the Stamp Act, which were publicly commended by Mr. Pitt, and have filled the town with wonder;" adding in another passage the remarkable words, "Burke is a great man by nature, and is expected soon to attain civil greatness."

William Burke, writing in March of the same year, thus expresses himself, "You have heard that his (Edmund) success has exceeded our most sanguine hopes; all at once he has darted into fame; I think he is acknowledged one of the first men in the Commons;" again, "Ned (Edmund) is full of real business, intent upon doing solid good to his country, as much as if he was to receive twenty per cent. from the commerce of the whole empire, which he labours to improve and extend."

The result of the deliberations of Ministry was to repeal the Stamp Act as a matter of expediency, but to pass a declaratory bill asserting the legislative power, in all cases, of the mother country. These, if Mr. Burke did not advise, he had a considerable share in defending, against a strong opposition which he subsequently characterized "as one of the ablest, and not the most scrupulous that ever sat in the house." Neither of the parties, however, of which it was composed was satisfied, because neither of their principles of coercion, or concession, were fully recognised.

It may be doubted indeed whether any body of statesmen acting upon an enlarged system for the

general interests of a great country, could prudently have done otherwise than the Ministry did. Wisdom is seldom to be found in extremes. They therefore took a middle course between the violence of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Grenville, who, it must be confessed, gave vent to much wild matter not very consistent with political discretion, the one about almost perfect freedom to the colonies, the other on the duty of unlimited submission from them. The phrase which Mr. Burke had applied to the former gentleman before he had the slightest idea of being connected with administration, of "talking fustian," might now be applied very justly equally to him, and to his brother in-law.

Both laws ultimately passed, though the Ministry never recovered the shock they occasioned; even the members belonging to the King's Household voting with Opposition. The merchants, however, were pleased; the discontents in America sensibly subsided, and might not have been renewed, but for what was termed the external taxation plan of Mr. Charles Townshend, unfortnately adopted the succeeding year.

Among other popular measures, a resolution passed the Commons against general warrants; which, in the hope of other favours from his friend the Duke of Grafton, then a member of Administration, drew from exile the celebrated Mr. Wilkes. He appeared, accompanied from Paris by Mr. Laughlan Macleane, an old acquaintance of Mr. Burke, privately in London early in May, 1766, and was determined, as he said, either to make his fortune from the fears of the government, or to annoy it.

The Marquis, however, would not see him. Mr. Burke, accompanied by Mr. Fitzherbert, was sent as his deputy, when, after five different interviews, his modest demands to compensate for his sufferings,—viz. a free pardon, a sum of money, a pension of 1500*l.* per annum on the Irish establishment, or equivalents—were peremptorily rejected, with a recommendation to leave the country. The negociation, however, was conducted with such address and temper by the secretary, that, after a douceur of three or four hundred pounds, collected from the private purses of Ministry, this pattern of morality and suffering patriotism retraced his steps to the French capital.

Early in June Parliament was prorogued. Toward the end of the month negociations were on foot for a change of ministry, accelerated by the manœuvres of Lord Chancellor Northington, who, to discredit them in every way, sent back the commercial treaty with Russia, effected by Sir George Macartney after great difficulty and subsequently admitted to be a very advantageous one, three times for revision upon very trifling pretexts. Of this William Burke wrote an account to Sir George; who, through this channel, and also from his young friend Charles Fox, then about to quit Oxford, was much pleased to hear his address and skill in the literary compositions connected with the subject highly eulogized by Edmund Burke.

On the 30th of July the Administration quitted office, without pension, sinecure, or reversion to any of its members, His Majesty to the last being extremely complaisant and even kind to their leader;

no cause was assigned for this turn out; no political misdeeds attributed to them; except a supposition that they had delayed longer than was decorous, to make a provision for the younger brothers of the King. The Duke of Grafton had relinquished his post in May. He also had no fault to find with his colleagues, but that they wanted strength, which he said could only be acquired by a junction with Mr. Pitt. To that popular statesman, therefore, the details of the new arrangements were committed, by an express intimation to that effect from His Majesty, who, in a manner, surrendered to him at discretion, by stating that "he had no terms to propose."

This removal of a body of men of fair talents and obviously good intentions, certainly excited a good deal of observation in the public mind; for though there was no violent popular enthusiasm in their favour, there was not a murmur against them. Some considered them hardly treated; a feeling which increased the marked and unvarying unpopularity of their successors. Others fancied they saw a system at work which would permit no ministry to remain long stationary, lest it should fix itself too strongly in the hearts of the people: and this opinion received some countenance from the pains taken by a minute calculator to turn over the records of office, when it appeared that since Mr. Legge quitted the situation of Chancellor of the Exchequer in May, 1761, not less than 530 changes of place, in and out, all depending on ministerial influence, had occurred; a circumstance perhaps unparalleled in the political history of the country.

On this subject Mr. Burke, in the debate on the

City of London remonstrance four years afterwards (March 15, 1770) observed—

"It is an observation sufficiently supported by the experience of all states and ages, that a fluctuation of councils in any kingdom is a manifest proof of its imbecility: admitting the position therefore, and applying it to the councils of Great Britain, I believe the records both of ancient and modern history will find it utterly impossible to point out an æra of such weakness as the last nine years of the English annals.

"During this period, Sir, the direction of public affairs has been in no less a number of hands than Mr. Pitt's, Lord Bute's, Mr. Grenville's, the Marquis of Rockingham's, the Duke of Grafton's, and Lord North's; so that if we were to divide the nine years equally between them, there would be just a year and a half for every separate administration.

"In the nature of things, Sir, this fluctuation of ministers could not be productive of salutary effects. Each different minister, without impeaching either the clearness of his head or the probity of his heart, had his own peculiar plan of action; so that system continually contradicted system; what was done by the premier of one day was counteracted by the premier of the next, and like Penelope, the whole wisdom of the legislative power was employed to unravel the political web, which cost such prodigious labour in the formation."

The difficulties which occurred in forming the new Ministry are sufficiently known to every reader of history. Having disgusted his relation and political associate Lord Temple, the Bedford, the Rock-

ingham, and every other party, Mr. Pitt, now created Earl of Chatham, seemed likely to have the Cabinet nearly to himself. Driven at length to his utmost shifts, by dint of cutting out reversions and pensions (forming an unfavourable contrast to the system of his predecessors), by harsh dismissals of some from office without known cause, and by as unexpected offers to others who would have nothing to do with him, showing altogether a most perturbed and rash state of mind, he assembled together a most motley group of stragglers, of which, seven years afterwards, Mr. Burke drew the following memorable and not over-charged portrait—

"He put together a piece of joinery so crossly indented and whimsically dove-tailed; a cabinet so variously inlaid; such a piece of diversified Mosaic; such a tesselated pavement without cement; here a bit of black stone, and there a bit of white; patriots and courtiers; King's friends and Republicans; Whigs and Tories; treacherous friends and open enemies; that it was indeed a very curious show; but utterly unsafe to touch and unsure to stand on. The colleagues whom he had assorted at the same board stared at each other and were obliged to ask—Sir, your name?—Sir, you have the advantage of me—Mr. Such-a-one—I beg a thousand pardons—I venture to say it did so happen that persons had a single office divided between them who had never spoke to each other in their lives."

Upon such a slippery pedestal did this eminent man expect to exalt himself to the gaze of the multitude, the chief, almost the only prominent figure in

the group. Either dictator, or nothing, had been for some years his motto; success and popular applause had in some measure spoiled him; he dreamt not of meeting with a superior; he could not brook the idea of having even an equal in office, for he had continually interfered in the details of the official business of others, when interference was neither delicate nor called for; he had hitherto loftily upheld the supremacy of his own opinions over those of all the rest of the cabinet put together; he would not condescend to conciliate or persuade any one, yet loftily expected to govern them all. Though therefore beyond doubt the most successful and popular minister which Great Britain ever had, his arrogance had repelled and disgusted nearly as many friends as his abilities or eloquence had ever drawn around him.

This disposition unhappily led him to care little for men or measures, except such as came out under his own especial protection; and it is difficult for an attentive reader of the history of this period not to believe, that to this overweening confidence in himself, and impatience of any thing like equality of talents or power in others, the good of his country was more than once sacrificed. A junction with the Rockingham party while in office, would have assured present harmony with America; and their united good sense, penetration, and the recollection of Sir Robert Walpole's refusal to tax that country, might have eventually warded off that contest altogether. The Marquis, it seems, made the attempt to win him more than once, but found the truth of

Bubb Doddington's assertion that he would be "an impracticable colleague."*

His own scheme of a ministry was utterly hopeless. The former lofty dictator soon submitted to be neglected by the men of his own making. He sunk in a few months to the degree of a subaltern in the corps which he had embodied and naturally expected to command; measures being adopted in the cabinet with regard to America (namely, the duties on tea, paper, glass, and painters' colours), in the very teeth of his proclaimed opinions and declarations; exemplifying the truth of another remark of the eloquent advocate of the Rockingham party; "When he had executed his plan, he had not an inch of ground to stand upon. When he had accomplished his scheme of administration, he was no longer minister."

Mr. Burke, desirous to let the public know as much as he knew himself of the cause of the dismission of his friends, drew up in a few hours an original species of party manifesto, "A short account of a late short Administration;" it blamed no person, made no lamentations, used no laboured arguments, drew

* Horace Walpole, whose politics were of an opposite cast, seems to have had just the same opinion of this popular statesman as a Member of Opposition, that Doddington had of him as one of the Ministry—namely, that it was difficult or impossible to act with him. Writing to Lord Hertford, Jan. 22, 1764, he says, in allusion to the state of the Grenville Ministry—"For Mr. Pitt, you know, he never will act like any other man in Opposition, and to that George Grenville trusts; however, here are such materials that if they could once be put in operation for a fortnight together the present Administration would be blown up."

no direct inferences; but, simply stating in as few lines as possible the public measures of the preceding twelve months, left the reader to draw his own conclusions. This of course is, though insinuated rather than expressed, in favour of the party he had espoused; half concealing the character of a dexterous partizan, under that of a calm observer.

A sharper skit upon Lord Chatham and his colleagues, in the Public Advertiser, followed in a few days, in the form of a comment on the preceding, under the signature of Whittington, a tallow-chandler in Cateaton Street. It possesses keen irony and humour, was much read and talked of at the time, and has been always attributed to the same pen.* These appear in the Annual Register for

* It has likewise been given to Richard Burke: there is no doubt of its having originated with the family, and bears every trace of the *quiet* irony of Edmund. It is subjoined:—

"To the Printer of the Public Advertiser.

"*In the multitude of counsellors there is safety,* says the wise man. If Solomon means privy counsellors, this nation ought to be safe beyond all others, since none can boast such a variety of ministers, and none such a multitude of privy-counsellors.

"Ministers, now-a-days, are pricked down for the year like sheriffs; and if none were to make more of their offices than the last did, I fancy we should see them *fine off*, or demand a poll, before they consented to serve. In my younger days, Chamberlain's *Present State of England* would last you seven years, and needed no more to be renewed annually, than a family bible or a Whole Duty of Man; but now you can no more guess who is in office to-day, by the court-calendar of last year, than you can tell the present price of stocks by Lloyd's list of Christmas 1745.

"But the main design of my taking pen in hand, was to refute the silly author of a late silly publication, called, *A short Account of a late short Administration.*

1766. Another humorous piece given to him is "Ship News for 1765;" in these the allusions to

"This half-sheet accountant shows his ill humour in the very title: he calls one year and twenty days a short administration: whereas I can prove, by the *Rule of Three Direct*, that it is as much as any ministry in these times has a right to expect.

"Since the happy accession of his present Majesty, to this day, we have worn out no less than five complete sets of honest, able, upright ministers; not to speak of the present, whom God long preserve.

"First, we had Mr. Pitt's administration;

"Next the Duke of Newcastle's;

"Then, Lord Bute's;

"Then, Mr. Grenville's;

"And, lastly, my Lord Rockingham's.

"Now, Sir, if you will take a bit of chalk, and reckon from the seventh of October, 1760, to the thirtieth of July, 1766, you will find five years, nine months, and thirty days; which, divided by five, the total of administrations, gives exactly one year and sixty days each, *on an average* as we say in the city,—and one day more, if they have the good fortune to serve in leap year.

"How spiteful, then, to cavil about a few days! for you see, by this calculation, the accountant's friends were, at most, only forty days short of their allowance; besides, I am told by a beef-eater at court, that from their *kissing in*, to their being *kicked out*, was really one morning, or six hours, more than one year and twenty days; a circumstance which he has maliciously suppressed.

"To proceed in my criticisms on this author, I must take notice of the compliments he pays his friends, at the expence of the Duke of Cumberland. He says, 'they came into employment under that Prince's *mediation*,' when the fact is, they came in by his *positive commands*. He conjured them, required them, on their allegiance, to accept: so that they have only the merit of *pressed* men; and like them too, though they are liable to be shot for desertion, as well as volunteers, yet, according to every rule of military justice, they may be whipt out of the service at any time, and have no title to the king's bounty for enlisting.

"The author's spite against the Right Hon. William, Earl of Chatham, in the county of Kent, Viscount Pynsent, in the county

the chief political characters of the day are happily hit off, and that of Charles Townshend particularly

of Somerset, appears in the same paragraph. He says, 'they (the late ministers) were removed by a plan *settled* by that nobleman.' How little expressive of his operations is the word settled! when we know full well, that, when *only* a great commoner, he refused to be responsible for any measures which he did not absolutely *guide*. The accountant, therefore, should have said *dictated* by the Earl of Chatham, as more suitable to his character, and to real fact, as is confirmed by the inquiry just published, as 'tis said, by his quondam friend Earl Temple.

"These two cronies, it seems, quarrelled about *dictation;* and the very man who a few years ago was glad to play *Bowman* to the great commoner at a city feast, stooping and rising for half an hour together, like the Chelsea water-works, on this occasion stood straight as a may-pole, and refused bowing either *to* him, or *for* him, in the front of the stage, while he sat skulking in a side-box.

"On the whole, it is next to *scandalum magnatum*, to allege that the Earl of Chatham did any thing less than dictate the late changes. He has, once more, deigned to take the reins of government in his own hand, and will, no doubt, drive with his wonted speed, and raise a deal of dust around him. His horses are all matched to his mind; but as some of them are young and skittish, it is said he has adopted the new contrivance lately exhibited by Sir Francis Delaval on Westminster-bridge; whenever they begin to snort, and toss up their heads, he touches the spring, throws them loose, and away they go, leaving his Lordship safe and snug, and as much at ease as if he sat on a wool-pack.

"In the long bead-roll of services done by the late ministry, which the author presents to our belief, one after the other, like the thirty-nine articles, there is one I cannot avoid laughing at, *the refusing to grant patents and reversions.* Their friends say they had the *power*, and *would not*: the more fools they:—their enemies say, they had the *inclination*, and *could not: tant pis pour eux.* But my Lord Chatham has already shown, that he had both *inclination* and *power*, by granting patents, in the first week of his administration, to Lord Northington, Lord Camden, and the Hon. Mr. Stewart Mackenzie, brother german to the

is, in brief, what he afterwards said of him more in detail.

Ten days only elapsed after the retirement of his friends, before he set out for his native country. The motives to this retreat, though "free to choose another connexion as any man in the country," do

Earl of Bute, and brother in office to himself, *par nobile fratrum*, which ever way you take it. Reversions were unemployed stocks, which the new ministry found cut and dry, ready to begin trade upon; and this is, as I take it, what our author alludes to by the late administration's 'rendering the ways smooth and easy to their successors.' To be sure, it was rendering the ways easy, to leave wherewithal to grease them; but why they did not employ these helps to smooth the way for themselves, is indeed surprising. It may be said, before they came in, they always declaimed against reversions; but this is a poor excuse—every body knows that professions of patriotism are like treaties of peace—*they only bind till we are strong enough to break them.*

"I finish my criticisms on this short performance, with an observation on the harsh and unwarranted word the accountant employs in relating the dismission of his friends: he says, 'they left their offices at the express command of their Royal Master;' thereby insinuating, that his M——y dismissed them spontaneously, and from a dislike to their measures. If their measures were good and popular, (as he pretends) it is unjust to his M——y to say he disliked them. The truth is, that no letters of dismission were sent to those that attended Court; and the countenance and behaviour of his M——y to the late first Lord of the Treasury marked the highest degree of esteem and personal favor; therefore, we may judge they were set aside at the never-ceasing importunities of an all-powerful *Thane*, to whom they never bended the knee; and for the conveniency of a new administration, from whom (perhaps vainly) he expected more complaisance.

"This is the first time I troubled you or the public with my politics, though I have been thirty years in London in the tallow-chandling way, and twelve a common-councilman, and, if the bell rings true, shall be lord mayor before I die. Therefore pray insert my letter directly, as you would oblige,

"Sir, your most humble Servant,

"Cateaton-street, Aug. 1766." "WHITTINGTON."

honour to his consistency. "To put himself," as he says, "out of the way of the negociations which were then carrying on very eagerly and through many channels with the Earl of Chatham, he went to Ireland very soon after the change of Ministry, and did not return until the meeting of Parliament. He was at that time free from any thing that looked like an engagement. He was further free at the desire of his friends; for the very day of his return, the Marquis of Rockingham wished him to accept an employment under the new system. He believes he might have had such a situation; but again he cheerfully took his fate with the party."

The office which he might have had, and which was indirectly offered, was that of a lord of trade; in his situation this disregard of political consequence, of rank, and emolument, arising from a nice sense of honour even against the advice of his patron, as it was a rare sacrifice, ought to be considered a great one.

Mrs. Burke, his son, and brother, were with him in this excursion, which continued for three months, visiting the little property left by his elder brother, who, as already stated, died in April the preceding year, Cork, Limerick, and some other places in the southern divisions of that kingdom, not omitting a short visit, as usual, to his Ballitore friends. A portion of his time was devoted to the antiquities and native language. Of the latter he knew enough to make some trifling translations, and about five years afterwards communicated to his old college acquaintance, Dr. Leland, who was then writing the History of Ireland, two volumes of old Irish manu-

scripts, containing several of the ancient written laws of that country in a very early idiom of the language, which he had accidentally discovered in London, on a bookstall.

In allusion to this topic, the tongue of his native country, he observed in conversation with Johnson; "The Irish language is not primitive; it is Teutonick; a mixture of the northern tongues; it has much English in it;" and when the similarity of English and Dutch was mentioned, he added, "I remember having seen a Dutch sonnet in which I found this word, *roesnopies*. Nobody would at first think this was English; but when we inquire, we find *roes*, rose, and *nopie*, nob. So we have the origin of our word *rosebuds*." His acquaintance with the filiation of languages was pronounced by several competent judges to be extensive; a subject which, from his other multifarious occupations, might be supposed to have escaped investigation.

Among other places which he visited during his tour, was the town of Loughrea in the county of Galway, in the neighbourhood of which his sister, Mrs. French, resided. While there, an anecdote is recorded of him not a little characteristic of his kindness of disposition, and for the authenticity of which, a lady (Mrs. B——) a near relative of a gentleman high in office under the present Viceroy of Ireland, and whose friends lived near the same spot, vouches.

Strolling into the town after an early dinner, on a fair or market day, the attention of Mr. Burke was attracted to a group of children, who were always a source of interest to him, gazing with intense admiration on the exterior of a kind of puppet-shew, or

rude theatrical exhibition, to the interior of which there were a variety of invitations for those who had the means to enter. The anxious curiosity, and the lamentations of the youthful group of their inability to gratify it, induced him to bargain with the proprietor for the admission of the whole, when some of his friends coming up at the moment, insisted upon exercising their privilege as his entertainers in paying the whole of the expence. "No, no, my dear friends," said he, "this pleasure must be all my own; for I shall probably never again have the opportunity of making so many human beings happy."

It was another proof of his good sense perhaps as much as of a kind disposition, that he was no croaker against poor human nature, or against the present times, as worse than those which have preceded them. "From the experience which I have had," he remarked, and I have had a good deal, "I have learned to think *better* of mankind."

The condition of the Catholics, then suffering under the extreme oppression of the penal laws, and the damp necessarily thrown by these injudicious restraints upon the prosperity of the country, drew much of his attention; it was in fact, as has been before hinted, a subject of early meditation. In 1761, and in 1764, it gave rise to frequent amicable discussions between him and Sir Hercules Langrishe, which, after a lapse of thirty years, were renewed in 1792 with more advantage to the subject. The age was not then ripe for much liberality of religious feeling; he therefore prudently abstained from obtruding his opinions on the public until a more favourable opportunity offered; but the materials for

a volume on the Popery Laws, an outline of which appears in his works, were at this time partially arranged.

Soon after his return a letter, dated Thursday, Nov. 6, 1766, mentions the particulars of his return; the remainder of it touches on family matters—

"I know you are too much concerned about us to suffer any little event of our lives to be altogether without importance to you. I sit down therefore to let you know that we are at last got safe and well to our own house in London; and had the satisfaction of meeting all those we love at least as well as we left them. Our passage was extremely rough. We never had been in any storm like it. All of us very ill. But thank God we were not very long at sea; and very fine weather, and tolerable roads from Holyhead hither made us ample amends for the tossing we suffered at sea."

It was during this visit that a lady of rank in Dublin, possessed of some literary talents, is said to have drawn his character in the following lines; and it may be observed here, that his female acquaintance in both countries seemed to join in the same favourable opinion—

"With judgment witty, eloquent with sense,
"Polite with ease, and free without offence."

An anecdote of this period, illustrative of his jocular spirit, was related by the late counsellor Lennan, of the Irish bar, to whose remembrance it was recalled by Mr. Burke himself, two or three years before his death, when the memory and peculiarities

of several of their old friends were brought under review.

Mr. Ridge, a barrister and intimate friend of Mr. Burke, having invited him and Mr. Lennan to dinner, urged, as an inducement for them to comply, that Foote was to be there, and likewise Mr. Doyle* (a surgeon in Dublin remarkable for wit and humour) between whom he calculated upon a fund of amusement. Mr. Burke however, to play a trick upon the English wit, proposed an amendment of the plan. This was to introduce Doyle, whom Foote had never seen, in an assumed character, that of a substantial, though home-spun country farmer come to town on law-business with the host, and who having intruded into the house at the dinner hour, was obliged in courtesy to be invited to the table, a hint being dropped at the same time to the mimic, that the opportunity was not to be lost, as he would be a fine subject for his talents to work upon. The scheme took effect. Foote assailed the pretended farmer, as the butt of the company, with his whole artillery of broad-faced mirth, ridicule, mimicry and banter—chuckling with evident satisfaction at his own apparent superiority, and the laughter created against "Squire Ploughshare." The latter, who had submitted with good humour in order, as the phrase is, to draw him out, at length seemed to pluck up spirit to retort, and pretending gradually to assume confidence, poured out so much wit and humour on the head of the actor, that the latter

* Mr. Doyle is the author of a well-known piece in Ireland, "Daniel O'Rourke's Dream."

could not conceal his surprise, and almost confessed himself matched; exclaiming every now and then to his host, "Where did you pick up this barn-door genius?" "Bitter dog!" "Sharp as one of his own sickles!" "Well said for a bumpkin!" and others to the same effect; nor was he informed who his opponent really was until the moment of separation.

The session commencing October, 1766, saw the Rockingham connexion nearly quiescent; a resolution that the land tax be four shillings in the pound, another for restraining the dividends of the East India Company, being carried against the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and with other evident symptoms of disunion in the Ministry, rendering an assault from without scarcely necessary.

The fame of Mr. Burke, however, as far as he thought it prudent to exert himself, continued to rise. William Burke, writing about this time, says, "Our friend E. B. has acted all along with so unwearied a worthiness, that the world does him the justice to believe that in his public conduct he has no one view but the public good."

Lord Charlemont thus writes to Mr. Flood, April 9, 1767: "I some time ago sent to Leland an account of our friend Burke's unparalleled success, which I suppose he communicated to you. His character daily rises, and Barré is totally eclipsed by him; his praise is universal, and even the Opposition, who own his superior talents, can find nothing to say against him, but that he is an impudent fellow. Yesterday a bill was brought into the Commons to exclude the importation of Irish wool from certain ports in England, when Burke supported the cause

of Ireland in a most masterly manner, and the bill was rejected."

The phrase "impudent fellow," though of course used here in a jocular sense, was in fact grounded upon a jealousy very general in the House of Commons, then infinitely more than at present, and which operated against Mr. Burke for many years, both among those who opposed him, as well as among those who stood in the same ranks with himself, of deeming it a species of presumption in men without parliamentary weight to assume the lead.

In that assembly, it appears, this spirit displayed itself sometimes; and *out* of it, burst forth very frequently into virulent abuse, chiefly in allusion to his being an Irishman,—his Jesuitical education, as they would have it, at St. Omer,—and his *assurance* in attempting to controvert the political principles, or to seize the lead from men so much his superiors in consequence.

Such a feeling, which would not now be tolerated for a moment, was then, perhaps, considering the Aristocratic structure of even the popular branch of the legislature, scarcely strange. He was not merely new to the house, but in a certain degree new to the country at large; and being without the essential adjuncts of commanding wealth or high connexions, was regarded in the light of one who usurps a station to which he has no proper claim. For it is another of the characteristics of Mr. Burke in his eventful and uncommon career, to have been the *first* person who attained, under so many disadvantages, to consequence in Parliament and in the country, simply by unaided talents; and thus to have smoothed the

parliamentary road for others who have been, and may be again, similarly situated.

It was a source of no ordinary wonder to all, to see such a man, not generally familiar to the political world, and without much known practice in public business, start at once to the highest eminence in that arduous pursuit; it was annoying to many to see their consequence overshadowed, their abilities, by the force of contrast, tacitly lessened, and an utter stranger bound at once over their heads from the retirement of private life to the imposing station of a first rate orator and an accomplished statesman.

This success, on considering his extraordinary capacity and acquirements, was not, however, so inexplicable as it seemed. Scarcely any one, perhaps none, who ever entered the House of Commons, had laboured so diligently to qualify himself for the duties of the office he was to fulfil, or united with diligence so much genius and power to profit by his labours. His general knowledge was various, and of such ready application, that in argument, or in illustration, his resources appeared boundless. He had carefully studied the ancients, and stored up what they knew; from the moderns he had drawn improved principles of law, morals, politics, and science. To these he could add, when he thought proper, the logic and metaphysics of the schools, with the more popular acquirements of poetry, history, criticism, and the fine arts; in powers of imagination no orator of any age has approached him; in prompt command of words, and in vigour of language, very few; in felicity, and when he pleased, elegance of diction when he seized the pen, no writer of modern

times. He had, in fact, enriched a soil naturally good by such assiduous culture, that it often threatened, and sometimes did bring forth weeds along with the choicest products. All this was accomplished, not in the quiet of affluence, but in the bustle of struggling for an adequate provision in life. "I was not," said he, in his forcible manner, "swaddled, rocked, and dandled into a legislator. *Nitor in adversum* is the motto for a man like me."

He was arrived too at the age of 36—a time when this multifarious knowledge was digested and methodized; when the useful had been winnowed from the chaff; when the mind of a man, if ever worth any thing, is capable of the most vigorous exertion. It was an age, however, at which, as experience has proved, few men (perhaps there is not another instance) who enter Parliament for the first time, are destined to attain the very highest degree of eminence, either as orators or men of business. This of itself would distinguish him as an uncommon man. If the difficulty here alluded to ever occurred to him, it was no sooner thought of than conquered, by an application that knew no intermission, and a zeal that no obstacle could subdue.

Respectable mediocrity as a speaker was as much perhaps as his friends, however high their previous opinion might be, could reasonably anticipate for him. To be distinguished in the Senate, the great arena of national talent, is the lot of few; to become great is one of those chances of life barely within the limits of possibility. Neither is it likely that he knew the extent of his own energies; for it is the occasion alone that elicits them from most men;

and these occasions were always at hand in the numerous and extraordinary occurrences of the late reign.

His rhetorical efforts were aided, in an eminent degree, by a tenacious memory, which made almost every thing once submitted to it, its own. This perhaps is one of the most valuable gifts of nature to an orator; for it will always supply him with matter, and not unfrequently with wisdom. Men vary in this respect very much. It is the delight of many to read much and to read attentively; but it is in the power of very few to retain what they have learnt with accuracy, or to draw it out in a popular manner, or on popular topics, so as to enliven and illustrate their discourse. No man possessed this faculty in so eminent a degree as Mr. Burke; and of the strength of his recollection on more recondite subjects, the following, from high authority, is a striking instance.

Some years ago a relative of Mr. Burke having called upon the late Chief Baron Richards, when at the bar, to consult him upon a point of law, the attention of the lawyer became diverted from the case before him to the memory and to the praises of the orator; and as soon as he understood the relationship existing between him and his client, and after a warm eulogy on his various powers, mentioned the anecdote as having come within his own knowledge.

Having dined at a party where, among others, were Mr. Burke and an Archdeacon of Brecon, whose name is not remembered, the latter, who was a man of considerable learning and antiquarian research, started several subjects of conversation, so abstruse or unusual, that few of his hearers felt inclined or

qualified to accompany him. Mr. Burke remained silent for some time, until in the midst of a fluent detail of some of the operations of Cæsar in Britain, he stopped the relater short by pointing out a material error as to facts, which changed the whole complexion of the story: the clergyman bowed, without making any reply. One of the more obscure Latin authors formed the next topic of discussion, in a quotation from whom Mr. Burke again corrected him as to two or three words, which was received with the same silent acquiescence. A third subject of debate was an old and very scarce volume containing some curious geographical details, in which also he very successfully played the critic to the surprise of the company. At the conclusion of the evening Mr. Richards and the Archdeacon walked home together. "Sir," observed the former, "I admired your patience when so repeatedly, and I dare say, unnecessarily interrupted by Mr. Burke; for, from the nature of your studies you must be a more competent judge of such matters than the bustle of politics can permit him to be." "Mr. Burke was nevertheless right and I was wrong," replied the Archdeacon; "nay, more; I confess I went previously prepared to speak on those subjects, for knowing that I was to meet him, and hearing that he was acquainted with almost every thing, I had determined to put his knowledge to the test, and for this purpose had spent much of the morning in my study. My memory however has been more treacherous than I had imagined."

Before the prorogation in July, an offer is said to have been made him by the Duke of Grafton of a seat at the Treasury Board, but clogged with stipu-

lations to which he refused to accede. A hint of this seems to be dropped by himself in a letter to Barry.

"The measures since pursued, both with regard to men and things, have been so additionally disagreeable, that I did not think myself free to accept any thing under this Administration." A negociation for the main body of the Rockingham party to join the Ministry soon followed, but came to nothing, "because," says he, in another letter, "it was not found practicable with honour to undertake a task like that, until people understood one another a little better, and can be got to a little cooler temper, and a little more fair dealing."

In a letter to his uncle (Oct. 21, 1767) he adverts to the visit of some of his relations to England, and their projected farming improvements—

"I am almost apprehensive that my long silence has put even your good-nature and forgiveness to a trial, and that you begin to suspect me of some neglect of you; I assure you there are but very few things which could make me more uneasy than your entertaining such a notion. However to avoid all risque of it, though I have very little to say, I will trouble you with a line or two, if it were only to tell you, that we always keep a very strong and very affectionate memory of our friends in Roche's county. Catty and our friend Courtney, I believe, can tell you that we never passed a day without a bumper to your health, which if it did you no good, was a real pleasure to ourselves.

"I take it for granted that the party was not much worse for their ramble, nor totally grown

foppish by their travels—I mean to except Garrett, who certainly will be undone by his jaunt;—he will be like those ingenious farmers in Gulliver, who carry on their husbandry in the most knowing manner in the world, but never have any crop. To complete his ruin, you will tell him I have not forgot the young bull which I mentioned to him; but I find I antedated my promise a little; for he was not calved when Garrett was here. However my Lord Rockingham has had one of the finest bull calves that can be; he is of an immense size, though when I left Yorkshire he was not more than seven weeks old."

On the opening of the session, 24th November, 1767, he broke ground against the Ministry in an impressive speech,* condemning their general conduct, and happily ridiculing General Conway's lamentations for the recent death of Charles Townshend, and the loss of his projected plans for the public good; which, though none of his colleagues knew what they were, were rather absurdly stated as likely to remove the difficulties of the country.

This step indicated irreconcileable differences of opinion, and in fact some resentment between the Ministry and the Rockingham party. Three meetings to effect a union between them had taken place, but in vain; and then Lord Chatham had resorted to what was considered unfair means (some attribute these means to the Duke of Grafton), to separate the friends of the Marquis from those of the Duke

* This speech will be hereafter reverted to as a remarkable document connected with the authorship of Junius's letters.

of Newcastle, though unsuccessfully, and to which he alluded when he said the motto of ministry was *Divide et Impera.* The Bedford party, however, proved more compliant to the wishes of his Lordship and his Grace; and in a fortnight afterwards they coalesced with those in power, forming what was called the Grafton Administration. The Nullum Tempus Bill, the distresses produced by the high price of provisions, the restraining act relative to the India Company, and a few other minor topics, occupied Mr. Burke the first part of the session.

The dangerous state of his uncle's health at this time produced an affectionate eulogium on his character (March 8, 1768) addressed to the son of that gentleman, his cousin, Mr. Garrett Nagle—

"I received your last from Ballyduff, with the most sincere sorrow. Indeed, on the return of my uncle's complaints, I gave up all hope, considering the nature of his disorder and the time of his life. I did not neglect to apply to Doctor Nugent; but at this distance, and with no full detail of circumstances and symptoms before him, he would not venture to prescribe. I make no doubt that he has skilful assistance in his own neighbourhood; and Dr. Nugent would cheerfully have added to it, but from fear of attempting any thing in a case which he cannot be fully master of. I suppose this letter will hardly find my dear friend alive. We shall all lose, I believe, one of the very best men that ever lived; of the clearest integrity, the most genuine principles of religion and virtue, the most cordial good-nature and benevolence, that I ever knew, or I think ever shall know. However it is a comfort

that he lived a long, healthy, and unblemished life, loved and esteemed by all that knew him, and left children behind him who will cultivate his memory, and I trust follow his example; for of all the men I have seen in any situation, I really think he is the person I should wish myself, or any one I greatly loved, the most to resemble. This I do not say from the impression of my immediate feeling, but from my best judgment; having seen him at various times of my life from my infancy to the last year, having known him very well, and knowing a little (by too long habits) of mankind at large. In truth, my dear Garrett, I fear I have said this or something to the same purpose to you before; but I repeat it again for my mind is full of it."

In March, 1768, Parliament was dissolved, the new one meeting in May, when he was again returned for Wendover. About the same time he purchased, for above 20,000*l.*, a small estate and agreeable residence, since burnt down, named Gregories, near Beaconsfield, in Buckinghamshire; the expense being increased by being obliged, much against his inclination, to take the seller's collection of pictures and marbles, as appears by the following letter to Barry:—

"Gregories, July 19, 1768.

"My dear Barry,

"My silence has been long and blameable, I confess it; I am really sorry for it, but I trust you will forgive us some inaccuracies in point of attention, when you are convinced we have none in point of real substantial friendship. Indeed none can value

you more, or wish you better, than all the persons who compose this family. On the close of the last Parliament, I had thoughts, amounting almost to a settled resolution, of passing this summer in Italy, and had even made some dispositions towards my journey. The pleasure and instruction I proposed to myself from your company, were not the slightest objects of my tour, for which reason I wrote the short note, wishing to fix you at Rome. But I have been diverted another way. We have purchased a pretty house and estate, the adjusting of which has kept me in England this summer. With the house I was obliged to take the seller's collection of pictures and marbles. He was a considerable collector; and though I by this means went to an expense I would not otherwise have incurred, yet I have got some pieces, both of painting and sculpture, which you will not dislike. We are in Buckinghamshire, 24 miles from London, and in a very pleasant county. So much for our situation. In other particulars we are, thank God, well as to health, and politically just on the same ground, out of employment, but with a quiet conscience and a pure reputation. Will. (Burke) and I are both chosen into this new Parliament. I think myself very unlucky in having lost one of your letters; they are all worth keeping. I do not know any that have more curious observations and better expressed. Your last observations on the improved architecture of the moderns, and its inferiority to the ancients, is truly curious, and I believe as just as it is ingenious. I am proud to have found it confirm some notions I have had myself on the same subject.

"As to the pictures which you are so good to think of for us, you will regulate them just as you please. We cannot say any thing precise as to sizes, because we have left the house in Queen Anne-street, where the doctor (Nugent) now lives, and have had only a temporary residence in town, taken by the winter. As to this house, it is hung from top to bottom with pictures; and we have not yet determined which ought to be displaced. So, as I said before, follow your own ideas; but by no means lose an opportunity of disposing of a picture which may make you friends or money, on our account.

"We hope to have some of your work when you come home. I am glad of Hamilton's opinion.—It cannot fail of being serviceable to you in some way or other. In the mean time I must press it upon you to live on the best terms with the people you are with, even dealers and the like; for it will not follow, that because men want some virtues, that they want all. Their society will be some relief to you, and their intercourse of some advantage, if it were no more than a dispelling of the unsociable humours contracted in solitude, which will, in the end, not fail of corrupting the understanding as well as the manners, and of utterly disqualifying a man for the satisfactions and duties of life. Men must be taken as they are, and we neither make them or ourselves better either by flying from or quarrelling with them; and Rome, and the trade of Virtù, are not the only places and professions in which many little practices ought to be overlooked in others, though they should be carefully avoided by ourselves.

"I remember you wrote to me with a great deal of sense, and much honest indignation, on the subject of some quackish pretences to secrets in the art, such as Magilphs, and the like. We had much of the same stuff here. It is indeed ridiculous to the last degree to imagine that excellence is to be attained by any mechanical contrivances whatsoever. But still the overvaluing of foolish or interested people ought not to induce us wholly to reject what may be subordinately useful. Every thing is worth a trial; and much of the business of colouring, belonging to a sort of natural history, it is rather worth while to make experiments, as many as one can.

"Forgive my trivial observations. Your friends here, the Doctor, little Dick (his son), Mrs. Burke, all frequently think of you. Mr. Reynolds and Barrett inquire for you very kindly. Indulge us with your letters as frequently as you can, and believe me, my dear Barry, with great truth and affection, your sincere friend and humble servant,

"EDMUND BURKE.

"Direct to me in Charles-street, St. James's-square."

How the money was procured to effect the purchase mentioned in this letter, has given rise to many surmises and reports, owing to the utter unacquaintance with his family, early life, and pecuniary means, of every writer without exception, who has written respecting him. A considerable part undoubtedly was his own, the bequest of his father and elder brother; the remainder was to have been raised upon mortgage, when the Marquis of Rockingham

hearing of his intention, voluntarily offered the loan of the amount required to complete the purchase.* It has been said that he even tendered a much larger sum, which the delicacy of Mr. Burke declined to receive, accepting only what was absolutely necessary, and this upon condition of being repaid the first opportunity.

Honourable as the transaction was to the friendship and delicacy of both, the ingenuity of party abuse has converted it into an attack upon the integrity of the person most obliged; yet, the Marquis was undoubtedly under obligations to him, both publicly, and for some attention paid to the business of his large estates in Ireland, when in that country two years before; less disinterested men, indeed, would have settled the matter otherwise—the one by quartering his friend, the other by being quartered, on the public purse. To the honour of both a different course was pursued; and admitting that the money was never reclaimed, it did not produce a third part of the annual income which the Whig party with great consideration and liberality, presented to Mr. Fox before quitting him in 1794.

Several admirers of Mr. Burke have expressed their regret that he ever submitted to be patronized—that he did not rather seek the patronage of the public, and pass his life in what they call literary independence. This is sad drivelling.

Patronage, as in the instance before us, is only a speedier means of accomplishing that which can

* The writer has been informed since the above was written that Mr. William Burke advanced part of the sum, but this admits of much doubt.

either not be done at all without assistance, or done only after encountering many and serious difficulties. It is but smoothing the passage of genius to fame. No harm has ever accrued from it, but on the contrary much good; and though a man of talents without such assistance may do much, yet with it he is likely to do better and to do more. Why it should not be accepted, when no degradation is stipulated, and no principle is abandoned, it is difficult for any but the conceited or the querulous to conceive: for he who may have worked his own way to the gate of the temple of fame, shows more of pride than of wisdom to reject the friendly hand held out to introduce him with greater honours to the interior of the edifice.

Private patronage, as it often precedes desert, exhibits disinterested generosity: public patronage, as it only follows desert, is but paying a debt due to celebrity. The former may sometimes arise from vanity, or the affectation of superior discernment, but at any rate it is kind; it is considerate; and will often do more for its object than the noisy and fleeting approbation of the multitude.

The *patronage of the public* is, indeed, a very high-sounding word, which in truth though often used means nothing. The public or people at large never, or almost never, patronized any one, without first having secured, in the language of commerce, value received; its countenance is never under any circumstances gratuitous; it must be purchased by previous service and well-known excellence, by exhibiting superior capacity and power in some particular way, whether in matters of utility, instruction, or delight, before the reward is ever given. Benefits

thus paid for before-hand by genius, cannot justly be called patronage.

As to the literary independence spoken of, it is more difficult to be defined, except it be the liberty to labour much and to enjoy little, to be talked of but not rewarded, to glare in the world by the brilliancy of your writings, and to die possibly in personal obscurity and poverty. Even Johnson might have written his fingers off without being the nearer to independence, had it not been for the kindness of Lord Bute, whose name for this alone if for nothing else, ought to be respected by every lover of worth and talents.

And as to the question of honours awarded to eminent authorship, such a thing, though common in every other country of Europe, was never heard of in England, till His present Majesty most graciously and liberally bestowed them upon a distinguished poet, for merits purely literary. Remembering these circumstances, let us hear no more absurd lamentations about Mr. Burke's deserting literature for politics.

The aspect of affairs on the opening of the session, November 8th, 1768, seemed not a little threatening. Remonstrances, petitions, and non-importation agreements, seconded by strong private representations to men of influence here, daily arrived from America, which, on the motion for the address, brought out some severe comments from Mr. Burke, on the conduct of Ministers to that country; their passiveness in the invasion of Corsica, and on some other popular topics of the time. Another conspicuous and constitutional effort was

on the injustice, sanctioned by a new bill, of bringing Americans guilty of treason in their own country to England for trial.

It is much to be regretted that no report of the speeches of this period is preserved. Mr. Burke's are chiefly known from contemporary verbal report, and from being marked in some books, as "masterly," "ingenious and able," "very eloquent and witty," and many similar phrases, but little or no detail is given; and the notices that do exist are rather in the witty sallies than in the argument; so that the fault of the reporter has been unjustly laid to the speaker. Lord Chatham at length resigned. With difficulties thickening round the Ministry, an old and troublesome performer, scarcely less a source of alarm to his friends than to his enemies, appeared upon the scene. This was Mr. Wilkes, again reduced to his last shilling, who, thriving by no other trade but patriotism, found it necessary to invite persecution in order to extract money; and, suddenly appearing from Italy as candidate for London, and then for Middlesex, though with an outlawry hanging over his head, unexpectedly gained the election.

The vacillation of Government, the legal proceedings, riots, and general ferment which ensued, require no other notice than for the employment they gave to Mr. Burke and Mr. Grenville, the leaders of the two divisions of the Opposition, who, agreeing in this, had few other points of union. The question of the patriot's expulsion, so memorable in the history of the country, was carried against the strenuous exertions of both, the 3d of February, 1769. A motion for an inquiry into the affair in

St. George's fields, by Mr. Burke, was negatived by a great majority; Mr. Wilkes's affairs and America afforded him fruitful themes for every week of the session; and, along with several other gentlemen of Buckinghamshire, he presented a petition to the King, at the levee, against the decision of the House of Commons.

Toward the close of it, an argument on the taxation of the colonies occurred between him and Mr. Grenville, which evinced that the latter, with four years' experience, had gained no increase of wisdom on the imprudence and impracticability of that measure. "He behaves," said Dr. Franklin, writing of Mr. G. shortly before this, "as if a little out of his head on the article of America, which he brings into every debate without rhyme or reason; tiring every body, even his own friends, with harangues about and against America."

An appeal by Mr. Grenville from Parliament to the country generally through the medium of the press shortly after this, brought the rival leaders more immediately before the public. It was in a pamphlet entitled, "The Present State of the Nation," written either by himself, or by Mr. Knox, a former secretary of his, under his eye, and which, without formally mentioning names, was designed to praise his own and Lord Bute's measures, and censure those of Lord Rockingham.

The reply of Mr. Burke, in "Observations" on the preceding, his first avowed political pamphlet, and little inferior to any that followed it, displayed the danger of attacking, at his own weapons, a writer so accomplished. In this piece he fairly convicts his opponent of inconclusive reasoning, of in-

accuracy in many parts of his subject, and of ignorance as to facts and details on the great principles of commerce and revenue, on which Mr. Grenville particularly plumed himself; and altogether the exposure here made of him, gives us a strong impression what a poor figure an active minister and debater in the House of Commons may make with his pen. A remarkable passage in Mr. Burke's reply on the then financial condition of France, of which Mr. Grenville seemed to know little, illustrates what took place 20 years afterwards, and exhibits the length of view which his more gifted adversary applied to this as to most other subjects.

"Under such extreme straitness and distraction, labours the whole body of their finances, so far does their charge outrun their supply in every particular, that no man, I believe, who has considered their affairs with any degree of attention or information, but must hourly look for some extraordinary convulsion in that whole system; *the effects of which on France, and even on all Europe, it is difficult to conjecture.*"

About this time Junius broke forth, the champion of popular rights, with a lustre and power over the public mind rarely excelled, and under a mask which time and the most prying curiosity have been unable to penetrate. If circumstantial evidence have material weight in any instance, it is difficult to believe from the documents some time ago published, that Sir Philip Francis was not the man; but he denied it positively, when denial was no longer a point of prudence, as no disadvantage could then have accrued from it. From the first the credit was given to Mr. Burke; and public opinion, after running the

round of the chief men of the day, and scanning their powers, opinions, and conduct, has again and again reverted to him as the only one capable of writing those letters. All his private friends, and Dr. Johnson among the number, were of the same opinion, the latter saying, " I should have believed Burke to be Junius, because I know no man but Burke who is capable of writing these letters; but Burke spontaneously denied it to me. The case would have been different, had I asked him if he was the author; a man so questioned as to an anonymous publication may think he has a right to deny it." Even many years afterwards, a print shown in Dublin, of the author of Junius, exhibited his figure leaning on a volume inscribed *the Sublime and Beautiful.*

Internal evidence, as far as regards the style, is not to be looked for, where the aim was such profound concealment. Nor in short compositions, like these famous letters, laboriously written as they confessedly were, would it be difficult to adopt and sustain a different tone from that of a long work. They are, in fact, the best modes that could be devised for concealment; for there is an unity of design in a letter, which offers little inducement to diverge from the point or topic with which it commences; the mind also being unexhausted by long application, continues fresh, forcible, and condensed to the purpose in view, whether it be in style or in substance; and these qualities of precision and force may be considered the chief characteristics of these compositions.

It may be observed, that on all the subjects on

which Junius dilates, by a specific and pointed attack, Burke and he agreed; while those on which they seem to differ, as the Rockingham politics, the measures of Mr. Grenville, and a few others, are gently touched; just sufficient to show some apparent difference of opinion, without any formal censure;—a plan just suited to ward off suspicion from an individual, and yet not lower his party in public esteem. Even the allusion to Burke himself, considering there are few names mentioned with approbation, means little. "I willingly accept of a sarcasm from Colonel Barré, or a simile from Mr. Burke." Such a slight, now that he was universally suspected as the author, might be politic, in order to divert attention from himself. If really meant as an attack, a more unhappy hit could not be made by any writer, who perfectly understood the nature of his own strength; for some of the letters, and many of the leading and admired points in them, are little more than strings of sarcasms and similes. Divest him of these, and, though still a clever writer, he is no longer Junius.

A general belief has prevailed, and there seems no reason to doubt it, that this celebrated writer, whether Burke or not, was a native of Ireland. The style bears little resemblance to that of any English author, but partakes much of the wit, the irritability, the pride, the bitterness of invective, the imagery, the almost morbid jealousy and animosity, which marked some of the political contentions of the sister country, especially those in her House of Commons. He had also, it appears, some sympathy for the grievances of that kingdom, when

no English politician threw away a thought upon her. Even the abuse of Scotland and Scotchmen, may have arisen from the same cause; a feeling of rivalry between the nations having often prevailed, when pushing their fortune on the neutral ground of England. Smollett had assailed the Irish character with severity in his works of fiction; and Junius may have thought it but fair to pay off the Scotch with interest, in matters of fact;—it was the only point perhaps on which Johnson and Junius agreed.

* * * * *

To advert more minutely to the long disputed point, the authorship of these letters, may perhaps be an unnecessary and unprofitable, though it has always been a popular, topic of speculation. But since the preceding was written, the attention of the writer has been again drawn to the subject by a literary acquaintance, who has taken the trouble to investigate the matter pretty strictly with relation both to external and internal evidence, and the result in his mind is a decided conviction that Mr. Burke, if he did not himself write the whole, assisted very materially in the composition of the Letters of Junius. Some trifling circumstances tending to the same point, have likewise occurred to the writer of this work.

On this matter, however, having no favourite theory to support, he is perfectly indifferent as to what degree of weight may be attached to the little evidence he offers. He is not anxious to prove that Mr. Burke was Junius; rather the contrary. Mr. Burke's reputation as an author or politician cannot be raised were the fact proved; but it has been sug-

gested to the writer, that in a work professing to be a faithful and impartial biography, he is not authorized to reject any matters, supported by probabilities, which relate to his principal, and through him, to the solution of a curious literary question long interesting to the public mind, from an opinion, that in the eyes of certain persons, his fame, in consequence of it, might suffer some diminution.

The additional circumstances may be stated in a few words.

1. It appears to have been the general opinion then and since, that Mr. Burke wrote much in the newspapers between the years 1766 and 1772, when finding Lord North's administration established too firmly to be shaken, the practice was given up as being no longer likely to prove useful. The fact perhaps is, that Richard and William Burke wrote what was attributed to Edmund.

2. It was the universal belief at the time, with both his own and the other party, that he was Junius; and contemporary opinion, as formed from a variety of minor circumstances which do not come within the knowledge of future inquirers, is perhaps, on such occasions, the truest. As such, he was often assailed in the newspapers of the day, as "coming from the land of impudence," the "Hibernian Secretary," the "lad whose face had been bronzed in the liffey," the "dealer in the sublime and beautiful," and much more of the same ribaldry.

3. From the first it was believed that Junius was an Irishman; and there are many points in the Letters to corroborate this belief. In addition to others which have been mentioned by writers on the subject, the allusion to "a job to accommodate two

friends at the castle" is a phrase which none but an Irishman, or an Englishman intimately acquainted with the localities of the Irish Government, would use; the *castle* being the residence of the Viceroy, and being used in Ireland only as a conventional phrase to signify whence any measure adopted by those in power in that country originates.

4. Another point is still more striking. In the letter to Lord North, 22d August, 1770, Junius reproaches Wilkes's opponent in the Middlesex election in the following terms: "He has discovered a new line in the human character; *he has degraded even the name of Luttrell*, and gratified his father's most sanguine expectations." An Englishman will try his recollection in vain to discover why the name of Luttrell in particular, more than any other name, should be degraded; but an Irishman, more especially from the south of Ireland, as Mr. Burke was, will explain the matter immediately.

"Colonel Luttrell," says a late interesting writer, "an officer of the Irish (or James II.'s) army, although completely vindicated in Lord Westmeath's letter to Mr. Harris of the charge, is still stigmatized as the betrayer of an important passage of the Shannon. (In the Siege of Limerick, 1691.) On stormy nights when gusts of wind agitate the river, while

'Foaming and fierce it rolls with fury on,'

the neighbouring fisherman or peasant usually execrates 'that traitor Luttrell, whose spirit is abroad shrieking on the waters.'" *

* Researches in the South of Ireland, by Thomas Crofton Croker, pp. 47, 48.

So strong is this prejudice, that the late Lord Carhampton, when in that neighbourhood some years ago, hearing it was still very prevalent, and desirous of trying how far it might be carried, asked a countryman who did not know him, what he would do to a Luttrell if he had one in his power? "All the harm I could," was the reply. Junius, it may be remarked, gives no explanation of the stigma he wishes to fix on the family; but treats it as a matter familiar to the reader.

5. It has been often said, that this writer could not have been educated at an English university, from using the term *Collegian* instead of that of *Gownsman* as applicable to their inmates; the former being unknown at Oxford and Cambridge. On the contrary, at Dublin, the appellation is Collegian. This would therefore seem another proof of the writer being a native of Ireland, or educated in her university; and if so, suspicion will again point at Mr. Burke.

6. It has been frequently remarked that the *law* which Junius displays is not that of a practising lawyer, but of a clear-headed, shrewd man, who had attentively studied the theory as a science, without knowing the minutiæ of it as a profession. Mr. Windham, Mr. Malone, and others intimately acquainted with Mr. Burke, used to say, that this was exactly the species of law which he possessed.

7. The late Dean Vincent was heard to say, that a gentleman connected with the education of young Burke when at Westminster School in 1769, could pretty well tell when a Junius was to appear.

8. A story is told by an eminent living poet, that a gentleman calling on Mr. Burke in 1770, du-

ring the publication of the letters, when the belief was strong of his being the author, was shown into a room where William Burke, who had just come in, was sitting, when Mrs. Burke soon entered, and after some general conversation, whispered to the latter in a secret manner, "Ned thinks he has outdone himself to-day." This anecdote, however, proves little; for he was then writing the pamphlet on the discontents, to which the remark was most probably applied.

9. Mrs. Burke once admitted that she *believed* Mr. Burke knew the author of the Letters, but that *he* certainly did not write them. There is, however, stronger evidence of this knowledge.

10. It is an undoubted fact that he himself indirectly acknowledged to Sir Joshua Reynolds, *he knew the writer of Junius's Letters*, but gave a kind of intimation at the same moment, that he wished nothing more to be said to him on the subject.

11. Sir Joshua and Mr. Malone believed firmly he was concerned in the composition, but that some other person wrote the rough draft, while he polished and finished them for the public eye, with such additions as he thought proper. If this supposition be true, it serves to solve some points which would be otherwise obscure. It would confirm the general impression that more than one person was concerned in their composition. It would in some degree save Mr. Burke's veracity in the conversation with Dr. Johnson, "that he did *not write* the Letters." It would be some justification likewise, in case of discovery, of the compliment paid by

him to Junius in the House; allowing that this was not a mere finesse to ward off suspicion.

The person who is supposed to have drawn the first draft of the Letters, was Mr. Dyer, a most intimate friend of the Burkes, a member of the club, and a learned and able man, though little known as an author. He had lived much abroad, and by the friendship of Mr. Chamier, was made a commissary in the army, through which, and by mixing a good deal in the bustle of life in London, he became acquainted with some occurrences in the War Office, and with the anecdotes, always in circulation, of the political matters and characters of the day. He died in September 1772; thus seeming to confirm another very general opinion, that the writer, whoever he was, did not long survive the conclusion of the Letters.

Mr. Burke drew up a character of him for the newspapers of the day: but a more remarkable circumstance was the *intrusion*, as it is said, of Mr. William Burke into his lodgings after his death, and cutting up a great variety of papers into the smallest possible shreds (there being no fire at that season of the year to burn them), which were thickly strewed all over the room, to the great surprise of Sir Joshua Reynolds, one of the executors, who, entering soon after, and asking for an explanation, was informed, "they were of great importance to him (Mr. Burke) but of none to any other person."

12. If Mr. Burke were Junius, it would serve to explain why, under the latter name, he made no reply to the attack of Johnson, from the reluctance which he felt to assail with severity in anonymous

warfare a man for whom he entertained a warm regard, and with whom, in his proper character, he lived in habitual friendship.

13. Much has been said as to the diversity of style between Burke and Junius, in proof of their not being one and the same person. This species of evidence will be differently estimated by different literary men. The aim of the writer of the Letters, it must always be remembered, was such profound concealment, that it was not likely he would himself, if a practised writer, furnish so obvious a clue to discovery. But after all, there is not, perhaps, so much difference in the *spirit* of Burke and Junius, as in the *manner*.

The sentences of Junius are differently constructed from those of Mr. Burke; the former aim at terseness, point, and an epigrammatic turn; but the sarcasms, the imagery, the invective, the similes and illustrations drawn from astronomy, chemistry, optics, and a variety of other sciences, are strongly characteristic of the school of the latter. No other writers, at least in our language, but Burke and Junius, have called in such auxiliaries in the discussion of political subjects. The literary friend already alluded to has taken the trouble to collate a variety of passages from both writers, from which it would seem, that a very strong similarity exists, or that they are in all probability, emanations of the same mind. Such, the present writer has been informed, was the opinion of the late Mr. Malone, who, in a conversation with a Mr. O'Farrell, of Dublin, said, to use his own words, "that unquestionably much

of the spirit, argument, and ornament of Junius, were *Burkish.*"

14. Another, and perhaps stronger, coincidence remains to be noticed.

It is well known to the readers of Woodfall's edition of Junius that the latter writer corresponded with Woodfall as printer of the Public Advertiser for two or three years before he assumed his more celebrated Roman designation, under a variety of signatures affixed to his printed essays, while in private, to Woodfall, his papers were commonly distinguished by the letter C.

At the opening of the session, November 24, 1767, Mr. Burke made a speech, already alluded to, on the address, touching sarcastically on the lamentations for the loss of Mr. Charles Townshend's plans for remedying the general distress about provisions, though none of his colleagues knew what these plans were—on the foreign relations of the country—the dearness of corn—the Manilla ransom—and the insidious efforts made by Ministry to separate the most intimate political friends.

The debates not being then reported, this speech would necessarily have shared the fate of other speeches of the time in falling still-born in the House, had not a correspondent forwarded it to the printer of the Public Advertiser,—not however as the speech of Mr. Burke in the House of Commons, but as *his own speech* delivered to his *club* some time before, and, as containing some home truths, not unworthy of being known to the public at large.* This cor-

* See Woodfall's Junius, vol. ii. p. 498.—Let the reader compare this with Burke's first speech reported in the parliamentary debates.

respondent's signature in the newspaper was Y. Z.; but to Woodfall privately it was C.—the identical writer two years afterward of the Letters of Junius.

It may be asked, whether this communication was not recognized at the time as the speech of Mr. Burke? This was by no means probable. The sum total of what passed in Parliament was certainly well known to the country, but not the particular speeches of individuals, not even an outline of them, except on occasions when general attention became excited to an important topic. And, admitting that it had been so known, there was nothing before the public, whatever suspicion there might have been in Woodfall's own bosom, to connect him two years afterwards, when the whole circumstance was probably forgotten, with the writer of Junius. It must likewise be remembered that the debates of that period, meagre as the materials are, were not published collectively until 1792, when this speech appeared for the first time as Mr. Burke's; and if we may believe Debrett's general assertion of the speeches of the surviving members having been submitted for their approval, it may be taken as in the main correct. Had he recollected, however, that this piece was sent by him to the newspapers in 1767, with the same private signature affixed as that which afterwards accompanied the Letters of Junius, we may be assured no such acknowledgment of its correctness would have been made; the thread of connection indeed was slight—was only known to Woodfall—and might not even occur to him—but still attention, if once excited, might follow the clue, such as it was, and lead, if not to certainty, at least to suspicion.

If Mr. Burke did not send this speech to Woodfall, or give it to Junius for that purpose, the latter person must have been present on the occasion, and taken notes of it himself. Why it was sent for publication, except from the natural partiality of a parent, is not so obvious; for it does not excel in that satire, force, or violence, in which Junius afterwards delighted, but on the contrary, bears a calm and moderate tone. Neither is it to be explained why this writer, whether known as Y. Z., or C.——or Junius, should call it *his* speech.

The coincidence on this matter is at least curious; the speech is the first of Mr. Burke's which is reported in the parliamentary debates; and stands likewise first in the four volumes of his speeches collected and published by an anonymous editor in 1816. None of the circumstances here stated prove Mr. Burke to be Junius; neither perhaps are they of much weight even as grounds for suspicion; but for the reasons already stated, the writer did not deem himself authorised to suppress them altogether.

In addition to this it may be observed that though Junius asserts "he was the sole depository of his own secret," it is almost certain this could not be the case, from the Letters being occasionally in different handwritings. Mr. Burke could have two or three amanuenses in his family who would not betray him.

In a private letter to Woodfall, Junius again contradicts his assertion by the following passage:— "The truth is, that *there are people about me whom I would wish not to contradict, and who had rather see Junius in the papers ever so improperly than not*

at all." (Private Letters, No. 6.) This account of his situation, if true, would again apply very strongly to that of Burke,—urged to write perhaps by his friends R. and W. Burke, or possibly by some of the members of his party, privy to the secret. This circumstance altogether deserves further inquiry.

It may also be remarked, that three of the persons whom Junius attacked, namely, Lord Mansfield, Sir William Blackstone, and Sir William Draper, believed for many years that Mr. Burke was the man; it does not appear however whether or not their opinions ultimately changed.*

Mr. Burke spent the recess at Gregories in superintending the repairs and alterations of his house; and, in attention to rural business, proved as active a farmer as any in the country, being often in the fields in a morning as soon as his labourers. It be-

* Since this was written, Mr. Coventry, in an ingenious volume, has claimed the authorship of these Letters for Lord George Sackville, and the evidence he brings forward is undoubtedly strong. Many points, in fact, render his Lordship a fair object of suspicion; others of minor importance would seem to render his participation in the affair improbable. But it is a curious circumstance, that against the claim of every person to whom these Letters have been attributed very solid objections may be urged: the only explanation of which perhaps is, that Junius, (for the purpose of concealment) did not always write his real sentiments, or did not write as the public supposed he would write, in his proper character.

Still more recently, when this work was partly printed off, a pamphlet has appeared giving the authorship to Mr. Burke, and adducing in proof of it some of the evidence just cited in the preceding pages, without any expectation by the present writer, of finding a coadjutor in the question.

came a luxury, he used to say, after the noise, heat, and drudgery of the House of Commons. In town he usually had a temporary residence during the sitting of Parliament, some of which were in the Broad Sanctuary, Fludyer-street, Charles-street, Duke-street, 37 Gerrard-street, and some others. Among his friends were some of the most distinguished men of rank in the country. At Mrs. Montagu's famous coteries, about that time in their zenith, he used occasionally to meet nearly all the literati of the three kingdoms, and the most remarkable characters in London.

Amid these engagements, and the labours of politics, a more humble friend was not forgotten, either in pecuniary assistance, or in letters containing the most friendly and enlightened advice.

His protection of Barry has been already noticed. The moment his own means became extended by being connected with Administration, he recommended him, seconded by the advice of Reynolds, to go to Italy for improvement, and with William Burke, offered to the best of their power to maintain him while there.

The painter set out in October, 1765, and remained abroad above five years. During the whole of this time he earned nothing for himself, and received no supplies from any other person than his two generous friends, who fulfilled their promise amid serious difficulties and claims of their own, in which William, in one of his letters, was obliged to confess, that "cash was not so plentiful as he could wish." A fact of this kind, so rarely imitated by the highest rank, or the greatest wealth, speaks more for

the virtues of the heart than a volume of panegyric; it is, however, only one instance among many of the benevolence of Mr. Burke.

Barry felt the weight of his obligations. Of Dr. Sleigh, he said, "He first put me upon Mr. Burke, who has been, under God, all in all to me." Writing to the Doctor himself, he says, "To your goodness I owe Mr. Burke and his family, which, in one word, is owing you all that is essential to me." To Mr. Burke he writes, "I am your property." And again, "you ought surely to be free with a man of your own making, who has found in you father, brother, friend, every thing."

A constant correspondence with their protégé was maintained by the whole family, chiefly however through William, as being less occupied in business; but occasionally with Edmund, who addresses him with the affection of a brother, and whose remarks and admonitions are so fine in themselves, and display such an intimate acquaintance with the arts and with the world, couched in the most eloquent style, that it would be a crime equally against his reputation, and against the enjoyment of the reader, not to give two or three of the principal, in addition to the one already quoted. The first was written while the artist remained in Paris; the others when he was at Rome.

"My dear Barry,

"I hope your kindness and partiality to me will induce you to give the most favourable construction to my long silence. I assure you that disregard and inattention to you had not the smallest share in it.

I love you and esteem you, as I always did ever since I knew you; and I wish your welfare and your credit (which is the best gift of Providence in the way of fortune) as much as any man; and am much pleased with the step I hear you are taking to advance them.* Mr. Macleane, your very good friend, tells me that you are preparing to set out for Italy. As to what regards you personally, I have only to advise, that you would not live in a poor or unequal manner, but plentifully, upon the best things, and as nearly as you can in the ordinary method of other people.

"Singularity in diet is, in general, I believe, unwholesome, your friend the doctor is in that way of thinking. I mention this, as Macleane tells me you have been ill, by ordering your diet on a plan of your own. I shall be happy in hearing that you are thoroughly recovered, and ready to proceed on your journey with alacrity and spirit.

"With regard to your studies, you know, my dear Barry, my opinion. I do not choose to lecture you to death; but to say all I can in a few words, it will not do for a man qualified like you to be a connoisseur and a sketcher.—You must be an artist; and this you cannot be but by drawing with the last degree of noble correctness. Until you can draw beauty with the last degree of truth and precision, you will not consider yourself possessed of that faculty. This power will not hinder you from passing to the great style when you please; if your character should, as I imagine it will, lead you to that style in preference to the other. But no man

* Afterwards Under Secretary of State to Lord Shelburne.

can draw perfectly, that cannot draw beauty. My dear Barry, I repeat it again and again, leave off sketching. Whatever you do, finish it. Your letters are very kind in remembering us; and surely, as to the criticisms of every kind, admirable. Reynolds likes them exceedingly. He conceives extraordinary hopes of you, and recommends, above all things, to you the continual study of the *Capella Sestina*, in which are the greatest works of Michael Angelo. He says he will be mistaken, if that painter does not become your great favourite. Let me entreat that you will overcome that unfortunate delicacy that attends you, and that you will go through a full course of anatomy with the knife in your hand. You will never be able thoroughly to supply the omission of this by any other method.

"The public exhibition is, I think, much the best that we have had. West has two pieces, which would give you great hopes of him: I confess, some time ago, I had not any that were very sanguine; but in these he has really done considerable things. Barrett * inquires very kindly for you—he makes a very good figure in this exhibition."

* This artist afforded another instance of the benevolence and friendship of Mr. Burke whenever circumstances placed it in his power to be of service. Barrett, it seems, had fallen into difficulties by the improvidence too frequently attendant on genius, and the fact coming to the ears of Mr. Burke in 1782, during his short tenure of power, he bestowed upon him a place in Chelsea Hospital, which he enjoyed for the remainder of his life. Mr. Young gives the following account of this artist, appended to a landscape of his in Sir John F. Leicester's gallery:—

"The first notice of the pictures of this artist that appears on record is his obtaining from the Society of Arts a premium of 50 guineas.

"My dear Barry,

"I am greatly in arrear to you on account of correspondence; but not, I assure you, on account of regard, esteem, and sincere good wishes. My mind followed you to Paris, through your Alpine journey, and to Rome; you are an admirable painter with your pen as well as with your pencil; every one to whom I showed your letters felt an interest in your little adventures, as well as a satisfaction in your description; because there is not only a taste, but a feeling in what you observe, something that shows you have an heart; and I would have you by all means keep it. I thank you for Alexander; Reynolds sets an high esteem on it, he thinks it admirably drawn, and with great spirit. He had it at his house for some time, and returned it in a very fine frame; and it at present makes a capital ornament of our little dining-room between the two doors. At Rome you are, I suppose, even still so much agitated by the profusion of fine things on every side of you, that you have hardly had time to sit down to methodical and regular study. When you do, you will certainly select the best parts of the best things, and attach yourself to them wholly.

"He was considered the best landscape painter of the time he lived in; and although the patrons of art cannot be accused of not duly appreciating his merits, yet after a long and successful career almost without a rival, partly from a liberality of disposition and an indulgence in expensive habits, he was not enriched by his professional labours.

"His merits were recognized by the Royal Academy, of which he was elected a member; and during the latter part of his life he enjoyed an appointment in Chelsea Hospital, given to him by his friend and patron Edmund Burke."

You, whose letter would be the best direction in the world to any other painter, want none yourself from me who know little of the matter. But as you were always indulgent enough to bear my humour under the name of advice, you will permit me now, my dear Barry, once more to wish you, in the beginning at least, to contract the circle of your studies. The extent and rapidity of your mind carries you to too great a diversity of things, and to the completion of a whole before you are quite master of the parts, in a degree equal to the dignity of your ideas. This disposition arises from a generous impatience, which is a fault almost characteristic of great genius. But it is a fault nevertheless, and one which I am sure you will correct, when you consider that there is a great deal of mechanic in your profession, in which, however, the distinctive part of the art consists, and without which the first ideas can only make a good critic, not a painter.

" I confess I am not much desirous of your composing many pieces, for some time at least. Composition (though by some people placed foremost in the list of the ingredients of an art) I do not value near so highly. I know none who attempts, that does not succeed tolerably in that part: but that exquisite masterly drawing, which is the glory of the great school where you are, has fallen to the lot of very few, perhaps to none of the present age, in its highest perfection. If I were to indulge a conjecture, I should attribute all that is called greatness of style and manner of drawing, to this exact knowledge of the parts of the human body, of anatomy and perspective. For by knowing exactly and habi-

tually, without the labour of particular and occasional thinking, what was to be done in every figure they designed, they naturally attained a freedom and spirit of outline; because they could be daring without being absurd; whereas ignorance, if it be cautious, is poor and timid; if bold, it is only blindly presumptuous. This minute and thorough knowledge of anatomy, and practical as well as theoretical perspective, by which I mean to include foreshortening, is all the effect of labour and use in *particular* studies, and not in general compositions. Notwithstanding your natural repugnance to handling of carcases, you ought to make the knife go with the pencil, and study anatomy in real, and, if you can, in frequent dissections. You know that a man who despises, as you do, the minutiæ of the art, is bound to be quite perfect in the noblest part of all, or he is nothing. Mediocrity is tolerable in middling things, but not at all in the great. In the course of the studies I speak of, it would not be amiss to paint portraits often and diligently. This I do not say as wishing you to turn your studies to portrait-painting; quite otherwise; but because many things in the human face will certainly escape you without some intermixture of that kind of study.

"Well, I think I have said enough to try your humility on this subject. But I am thus troublesome from a sincere anxiety for your success. I think you a man of honour and of genius, and I would not have your talents lost to yourself, your friends, or your country, by any means. You will then attribute my freedom to my solicitude about you, and my solicitude to my friendship. Be so

good to continue your letters and observations as usual. They are exceedingly grateful to us all, and we keep them by us.

"Since I saw you I spent three months in Ireland. I had the pleasure of seeing Sleigh but for a day or two. We talked much about you, and he loves and esteems you extremely. I saw nothing in the way of your art there which promised much. Those who seemed most forward in Dublin when we were there, are not at all advanced, and seem to have little ambition. Here they are as you left them; Reynolds every now and then striking out some wonder. Barrett has fallen into the painting of views. It is the most called for, and the most lucrative part of his business. He is a wonderful observer of the accidents of nature, and produces every day something new from that source, and indeed is on the whole a delightful painter, and possessed of great resources. But I do not think he gets forward as much as his genius would entitle him to; as he is so far from studying, that he does not even look at the pictures of any of the great masters, either Italians or Dutch. A man never can have any point of pride that is not pernicious to him. He loves you, and always inquires for you. He is now on a night-piece, which is indeed noble in the conception; and in the execution of the very first merit. When I say he does not improve, I do not mean to say that he is not the first we have in that way, but that his capacity ought to have carried him to equal any that ever painted landscape.

"I have given you some account of your friends among the painters here, now I will say a word of

ourselves. The change of the Ministry you know was pleasing to none of our household. . . . Your friend Will. did not think proper to hold even the place he had. He has therefore, with the spirit you know to belong to him, resigned his employment. But I thank God, we want in our new situation neither friends, nor a reasonable share of credit. It will be a pleasure to you to hear, that if we are out of play, others of your friends are in. Macleane is under-secretary in Lord Shelburne's office; and there is no doubt but he will be, as he deserves, well patronized there."

"My dear Barry, April 26, 1767.

"I am rather late in thanking you for the last letter, which was, like all the others, friendly, sensible, and satisfactory. We have had a pretty stirring session hitherto, and, late as it is, I don't think we have got through three parts of it. The opposition to the present Ministry has been carried on with great vigour, and with more success than has of late years usually attended an opposition to Court measures. You know too much of our situation and temper not to see that we have taken a pretty active and sanguine part. You will rejoice to hear that our friend William has exerted himself two or three times in public with the highest credit. (An account is here given of his brother Richard breaking his leg.)

"The exhibition will be opened to-morrow. Reynolds, though he has, I think, some better portraits than he ever before painted, does not think mere heads sufficient, and having no piece of fancy finish-

ed, sends in nothing this time. Barret will be better off than ever. He puts in a night-piece in a very noble style, and another very beautiful landscape, with a part of a rainbow on a waterfall. They seem to be both excellent pictures. Jones, who used to be poet laureate to the exhibition, is prepared to be a severe and almost general satirist upon the exhibitors. His ill-behaviour has driven him from all their houses, and he resolves to take revenge in this manner. He has endeavoured to find out what pictures they will exhibit, and, upon such information as he has got, has beforehand given a poetic description of those pictures which he has not seen. I am told he has gone so far as to abuse Reynolds at guess, as an exhibitor of several pictures, though he does not put in one. This is a very moral poet. You are, my dear Barry, very kind in the offers to copy some capital picture for me; and you may be sure, that a picture which united yours to Raphael's efforts would be particularly agreeable to us all. I may one time or other lay this tax upon your friendship; but at present I must defer putting you to the trouble of such laborious copies. Because, until we have got another house, it will be impossible for me to let you know what size will suit me. Indeed, in our present house (Queen Anne-street), the best picture of any tolerable size would embarrass me. Pray let me hear from you as often as you can; your letters are most acceptable to us. All your friends here continue to love and constantly to inquire after you. Adieu, dear Barry, and believe me most sincerely yours,

"E. BURKE."

"MY DEAR BARRY, August 24, 1767.

"It is with shame I find myself so late in answering a letter which gave me such sincere pleasure as your last. Whatever you may think of my delay, be persuaded that no want of regard for you had the least share in it. We all remember you with much esteem and affection; and I hope we are not, any of us, of a character to forget our friends, because they are fifteen hundred miles distance from us, and away a year or two. I did indeed strongly flatter myself that Will. and I might probably have taken a trip to Rome in the recess. But the session ran to an unusual and mortifying length; and as soon as it closed, a political negotiation, for bringing my Lord Rockingham to the Administration, was opened, and thus our summer insensibly slid away; and it became impossible for me, either in his company, or alone, to begin an enterprise that would demand four good months at least. The mention I have made of this negotiation has, I dare say, put you a little in a flutter.*.... At present there is no prospect of a sudden change; therefore we remain as we are; but with all the content which consciences at rest and circumstances in no distress can give us. We are now in the country, in a pretty retired spot about three miles from town. Richard is at Southampton for the benefit of sea-bathing, which has already been useful to his leg, and he gathers strength in the limb every day. This is our situation. As to your other

* The sentence omitted here has been already quoted in another part of this work.

friends, Barrett has got himself also a little country-house. His business still holds on; and indeed he deserves encouragement, for, independent of being a very ingenious artist, he is a worthy and most perfectly good-humoured fellow. However he has had the ill-luck to quarrel with almost all his acquaintance among the artists, with Stubbs, Wright, and Hamilton; they are at mortal war, and I fancy he does not stand very well even with West. As to Mr. Reynolds, he is perfectly well, and still keeps that superiority over the rest, which he always had, from his genius, sense, and morals.

"You never told me whether you received a long, I am afraid not very wise letter from me, in which I took the liberty of saying a great deal upon matters which you understand far better than I do. Had you the patience to bear it? You have given a strong, and, I fancy, a very faithful picture of the dealers in taste with you. It is very right that you should know and remark their little arts; but as fraud will intermeddle in every transaction of life, where we cannot oppose ourselves to it with effect, it is by no means our duty or our interest to make ourselves uneasy, or multiply enemies on account of it. In particular you may be assured that the traffic in antiquity, and all the enthusiasm, folly, or fraud, that may be in it, never did nor never can hurt the merit of living artists: quite the contrary, in my opinion; for I have ever observed, that whatever it be that turns the minds of men to any thing relative to the arts, even the most remotely so, brings artists more and more into credit and repute; and though now and then the mere broker and dealer in

such things runs away with a great deal of the profit; yet in the end ingenious men will find themselves gainers, by the dispositions which are nourished and diffused in the world by such pursuits.* I praise exceedingly your resolution of going on well with those whose practices you cannot altogether approve. There is no living in the world upon any other terms.

"Neither Will. nor I were much pleased with your seeming to feel uneasy at a little necessary increase of expense on your settling yourself. You ought to know us too well not to be sensible that we think right upon these points. We wished you at Rome, that you might cultivate your genius by every advantage which the place affords, and to stop at a little expense, might defeat the ends for which the rest were incurred. You know we desired you at parting never to scruple to draw for a few pounds extraordinary, and directions will be given to take your drafts on such occasions. You will judge yourself of the propriety, but by no means starve the cause. Your father wrote to me some time ago. The old gentleman seems to be uneasy at not hearing from you. I was at some distance in the country, but Mr. Bourke opened the letter, and gave him such an account as he could. You ought from time to time to write to him. And pray let *us* hear from you. How goes on your Adam and Eve? Have you yet got your chest? Adieu!—let us hear from you, and believe us all most truly and heartily yours."

* Daily observation shows the truth of this sagacious remark.

If these letters exhibit the writer's knowledge of the arts, sincerity of regard, wisdom of remark upon every subject he touches, and generous delicacy of conduct in taking off as much as he could the feeling of dependance from the mind of the painter by veiling the patron under the friend, the following is perhaps still more admirable for its keen estimate of the importance of temper and conduct to all men—for teaching the truest wisdom in the practical business of living, not merely in the world, but with the world. The occasion was the froward temper of Barry, involving him in frequent squabbles with his brethren at Rome; and it should be read by every wayward and contentious man the moment he rises in the morning, and before he retires to rest at night. It displays also, in a peculiar degree, the same prophetic sagacity which so often distinguished Mr. Burke; the prediction as to what the fate of the artist would be if he did not correct his peculiarities, being literally verified.

"MY DEAR BARRY, Gregories, Sept. 16, 1769.

"I am most exceedingly obliged to your friendship and partiality, which attributed a silence very blameable on our parts to a favourable cause: let me add in some measure to its true cause, a great deal of occupation of various sorts, and some of them disagreeable enough.

"As to any reports concerning your conduct and behaviour, you may be very sure they could have no kind of influence here; for none of us are of such a make as to trust to any one's report for the character of a person whom we ourselves know.

Until very lately, I had never heard any thing of your proceedings from others; and when I did, it was much less than I had known from yourself, that you had been upon ill terms with the artists and virtuosi in Rome, without much mention of cause or consequence. If you have improved these unfortunate quarrels to your advancement in your art, you have turned a very disagreeable circumstance to a very capital advantage. However you may have succeeded in this uncommon attempt, permit me to suggest to you, with that friendly liberty which you have always had the goodness to bear from me, that you cannot possibly have always the same success, either with regard to your fortune or your reputation. Depend upon it, that you will find the same competitions, the same jealousies, the same arts and cabals, the emulations of interest and of fame, and the same agitations and passions here that you have experienced in Italy; and if they have the same effect on your temper, they will have just the same effects upon your interest; and be your merit what it will you will never be employed to paint a picture. It will be the same at London as at Rome; and the same in Paris as in London: for the world is pretty nearly alike in all its parts: nay, though it would perhaps be a little inconvenient to me, I had a thousand times rather you should fix your residence in Rome than here, as I should not then have the mortification of seeing with my own eyes a genius of the first rank lost to the world, himself, and his friends, as I certainly must, if you do not assume a manner of acting and thinking here, totally different from what your letters from Rome have described to me.

"That you have had just subjects of indignation always, and of anger often, I do no ways doubt; who can live in the world without some trial of his patience? But believe me, my dear Barry, that the arms with which the ill dispositions of the world are to be combated, and the qualities by which it is to be reconciled to us, and we reconciled to it, are moderation, gentleness, a little indulgence to others, and a great deal of distrust of ourselves; which are not qualities of a mean spirit, as some may possibly think them; but virtues of a great and noble kind, and such as dignify our nature as much as they contribute to our repose and fortune; for nothing can be so unworthy of a well-composed soul, as to pass away life in bickerings and litigations, in snarling and scuffling with every one about us.

"Again and again, my dear Barry, we must be at peace with our species; if not for their sakes, yet very much for our own. Think what my feelings must be, from my unfeigned regard, and from my wishes that your talents might be of use, when I see what the inevitable consequences must be, of your persevering in what has hitherto been your course, ever since I knew you, and which you will permit me to trace out for you beforehand.

"You will come here; you will observe what the artists are doing; and you will sometimes speak a disapprobation in plain words, and sometimes by a no less expressive silence. By degrees you will produce some of your own works. They will be variously criticized; you will defend them; you will abuse those that have attacked you; expostulations, discussions, letters, possibly challenges, will

go forward; you will shun your brethren, they will shun you. In the meantime, gentlemen will avoid your friendship, for fear of being engaged in your quarrels; you will fall into distresses which will only aggravate your disposition for farther quarrels; you will be obliged for maintenance to do any thing for any body; your very talents will depart for want of hope and encouragement; and you will go out of the world fretted, disappointed, and ruined.

"Nothing but my real regard for you could induce me to set these considerations in this light before you. Remember, we are born to serve and to adorn our country, and not to contend with our fellow citizens, and that in particular your business is to paint and not to dispute. . . . . .

"If you think this a proper time to leave Rome (a matter which I leave entirely to yourself), I am quite of opinion you ought to go to Venice. Further, I think it right to see Florence and Bologna; and that you cannot do better than to take that route to Venice. In short, do every thing that may contribute to your improvement, and I shall rejoice to see you what Providence intended you, a very great man. This you were, in your *ideas*, before you quitted this; you best know how far you have studied, that is, practised the mechanic; despised nothing till you had tried it; practised dissections with your own hands, painted from nature as well as from the statues, and portrait as well as history, and this frequently. If you have done all this, as I trust you have, you want nothing but a little prudence, to fulfil all our wishes. This, let me tell you, is no small matter; for it is impossible

for you to find any persons any where more truly interested for you; to these dispositions attribute every thing which may be a little harsh in this letter. We are, thank God, all well, and all most truly and sincerely yours. I seldom write so long a letter. Take this as a sort of proof how much I am, dear Barry,

" Your faithful friend
" and humble servant,
" EDMUND BURKE."

CHAPTER V.

Mr. Burke and Sir William Bagott.—Mr. Fox.—Pamphlet on the Discontents.—Parliamentary Business.—Visit to France.—Character of the House of Commons.—Mr. Burke's argument against taxing Irish Absentees.—Letter to General Lee.—Speech of the 19th of April, 1774.—Goldsmith.—Ill-humour of Barry.—Johnson and Burke.—Election for Bristol.

THE address, in reply to the speech from the throne, the City remonstrance to the King, the affairs of Mr. Wilkes, and the discontents which generally prevailed, brought Mr. Burke forward almost daily in the session commencing 9th January, 1770.

The debate of the first day, in which he took a leading part, occupied 12 hours: and the second called forth an animated defence of his friend Sir George Saville, from the censures of General Conway, for the alleged violence of his expressions in debate.

His most distinguished exertions during the session besides these, were on the 24th January, for a redress of grievances previous to granting a supply: on the 15th March, regarding the famous address, remonstrance, and petition of the City of London to the King, which he discussed with moderation and temper, aiming to apologize for the warmth of the popular feeling: on the 28th March, in favour of the bounty on the exportation of corn: on the 30th March, in support of Mr. Grenville's bill for regu-

lating the trials of controverted elections, when he was represented by the writers of the time as having on these occasions spoken "inimitably well."

On the 8th May, he moved eight resolutions, which were supported by Mr. G. Grenville, relating to the disorders in North America, which were meant to censure the plan, or rather, as he said, the unhappy want of plan, of Ministers, in conducting the affairs of that country; and introduced by a speech reported by contemporary opinion to be "full of sound argument, and infinite wit and raillery." In fact all his exertions were characterized as being of this description, though from the little attention then paid to reporting, or rather the hostility of the House at that time to the publication of their debates, the particulars, like those of other speeches, are not given, or given so meagrely as to afford little idea of what they were in delivery.

A tolerable criterion of the powers of a speaker in the House of Commons is the degree of abuse cast upon him by anonymous writers in the interest of the opposite party; and of this ungracious species of reputation, to which allusion has been already made, he had no ordinary share. The prejudice which it occasionally created against him, even among persons who ought to have known better, may be judged of from the following circumstance:—

In the debate on the third reading of Mr. Grenville's bill for regulating controverted elections, which Lord North, Mr. Fox, and the Ministry, opposed, Sir William Bagott, who usually voted with the latter, said he must, on that measure, side with Opposition; but not from the slightest partiality to

that body, for its whole system, in his opinion, went to wound the Constitution through the sides of the Ministry; and he concluded by insinuating something about the body with which he was chiefly connected (the country gentlemen) being the only one of real importance or consideration in that House, and to whom the first and chief attention should be paid.

Mr. Burke, as the mouth of his party, was not likely to let such declarations escape without notice. He entered on a vigorous defence of his friends, and drew a fine distinction between faction, and the opposition of party founded on principle. He proceeded to show that Parliament was not meant to be a representation of the landed property only, as the preceding speaker seemed to believe, but of the commercial interest in an equal or still greater degree, as appeared from the establishment of so many boroughs—essential parts of that representation, existing in times earlier than any annals or history can give testimony of: also, that there never was any parliament from which the learned gentlemen of the long robe were excluded, except that one, infamous to a proverb, in the appellation which it acquired of *parliamentum indoctum*. He went on to compare the benefit derived to society from the unactuated load of landed abilities, which descended from generation to generation in the useless members of the community, and that derived from the acquirements, improvements, and activity of mental abilities; and showed that either might be pernicious, yet that both were of real benefit wherever and whenever they mixed, but always more so when acting in aid of each other

The wit with which this topic was handled, as well perhaps as the general tone of the argument, irritated Sir William to a violent degree, insomuch that he went down to the House two days after, and gave loose to a most unmeasured invective against what he termed his 'traducer,' designating him indirectly a 'black Jesuit,' 'a pupil of St. Omer's,' fit to be 'secretary to an Inquisition for burning heretics.' Mr. Burke, who on these occasions preserved great equanimity of temper, smiled frequently during this tirade; and on its conclusion, assailed him again with a torrent of ridicule, which it is said the baronet never forgave, particularly when, from the day on which the contest took place, he was afterwards, for a time, nick-named 'Burke's April-fool.'

On another occasion, a considerable time after this, Sir William preserved more temper, and came off with better success. Mr. Burke having spoken at considerable length, made a long pause, a thing very unusual with him, which induced the baronet, who rose to follow him in the debate, to think he had ended.—"Sir, I have not yet concluded," said Mr. Burke—"I beg pardon," replied Sir William, with good humour, "but the honourable member can make allowance for the mistakes of a country gentleman;" adding with great happiness, a Latin quotation, to the effect, that being no more than a rustic, he conceived the stream of eloquence had ceased, but though it seemed wholly inexhaustible, it might probably prove tiresome.—It frequently happened, however, that the baronet came under the sarcastic lash of Mr. Burke.

Sir William Bagott indeed was not the only one who thought that the importance and wisdom of a senator ought to depend on the amount of the stake he possesses in the land. Lord Crewe was accustomed to tell a pleasant story of a very opulent Liverpool trader, who, having invested a large sum in the purchase of estates, expressed the height of his ambition to be to have a park as large as that of the Duke of Bedford. Calling upon his lordship one day, at a time when from some matter of political interest Mr. Burke's name was on every tongue, and in every newspaper, he exclaimed in a broad, vulgar, self-sufficient manner—"And after all, who is this Mr. Burke, my Lord, that they make such a fuss about? Why, he's nobody.—*He hasn't got our number of acres*, my Lord."

A circumstance, which subsequent events made of interest, took place in the debate on the address this session, when Mr. Charles Fox, in his first parliamentary essay, attempting to answer the objections of the Rockingham party, had some of his arguments successfully turned into ridicule by its leader. No offence was taken by the young orator. He had been taught some time before, by the literary society at his father's table, to think highly of the talents of Mr. Burke. He had known him personally since 1766, and they had been intimate for about two years; and further acquaintance insured to the latter that admiration from his younger friend, which all who knew him intimately involuntarily felt. From an admirer of Mr. Burke, Mr. Fox became his disciple, from his disciple his coadjutor, from his coadjutor his amicable rival for fame; until at length,

by the occurrence of extraordinary and unlooked-for events, he terminated as he began his career, his opponent.

Of this celebrated man it is unnecessary to say much, and very difficult to draw an impartial character, without giving offence to his friends, or gratifying the spleen of a large body of political adversaries. Of powers the most commanding, and parliamentary talents the most extraordinary, he did not often exemplify, either in public or private life, the possession of that sound prudence and practical wisdom which insure public confidence and reward. Something of this was owing to natural disposition, something perhaps to parental indulgence, which left him in the most critical period of life wholly uncontrolled. His mind, manly even in youth, seemed to have reached maturity at a bound; between the boy and the statesman there was scarcely an interval. But there accompanied this early precocity an utter disregard of self-discipline and control, and an absolute tyranny of the passions over the judgment. The very excess of his dissipated habits, his neglect of the observances of common life, his indifference to private character, which, even in his most popular days, made him an object of distrust to the reflecting part of the nation, all indicated an ill-regulated mind. It is said, as an additional proof of it, that he paid very little regard to religion; if so, who but must sincerely regret so great a misfortune? If such be the inevitable result of early debauchery upon the character, it is, indeed, a heavy sentence upon frail humanity.

Yet his virtues were of the first cast. He was

affectionate, mild, generous, friendly, and sincere; obscuring his errors so effectually, that scarcely one of his friends could see them, or could for a moment admit the uncharitable interpretation often put upon them by the world. Few men in public life, except perhaps Mr. Burke, have had more political enemies, though in private life perhaps not one; we might be displeased with the politician, but it was scarcely possible to hate the man. There was a good-natured, almost culpable, facility about his character, when popularity was in question, which frequently brought him into the society, and sometimes under the influence of persons, not only of inferior talents, but of questionable principles and views; and though without any community of ill-feeling with these, or with the enemies of our constitution and government, it must be confessed that he occasionally gave such persons his countenance, so as to alarm the more cautious, the more circumspect, or more timid part of the public: but this was one of his many sacrifices to vulgar applause; made at a time when it became necessary to strengthen his few remaining adherents by allies of every description. The same facility made him, in the opinion of many, a dupe to the plausibility of Buonaparte, in 1802 and 1806, and, at the former period, caused him to admit to his table in France a convicted British traitor, fresh from carrying arms against his native country.

The extraordinary powers which he possessed were chiefly from nature, and he often seemed to depend upon them alone without consulting the surer guide of experience. He possessed, of course, infinitely more of ingenuity than of knowledge, more of

originality of thought than of the fruits of patient research; more of decision than of reflection; he was more acute than discriminating; he was on most public matters self-willed through life, obstinately attached to his own opinions, and undervaluing, though not offensively, those of the rest of mankind. He was heard to say in the earlier part of life, that "he had never wished to do any thing which he did not do," and that "he considered advice an insult to his understanding."

In conversation, he was backward and sluggish, seldom rising above mediocrity; in epistolary communication, common-place; in historical writing, neither profound nor original; in debate alone, he often rose above all competition, especially in bursts of indescribable power; but as an orator, taken in the higher and more extended sense of the word, whose outpourings are worthy to live, and must live, in the page of history and in the admiration of posterity, he was on all great occasions much excelled by Burke. He had no command over the passions or imaginations of his hearers, and without this power, an orator never can be at the head of his art. The bent of his mind in politics, was to great things rather than to the more common; to what was imposing and theoretically perfect, rather than to what was useful and applicable; he caught eagerly at the bold and the splendid, at daring novelties and plausible generalities, without sufficiently considering, or caring for, the difficulties opposed to their being carried into effect. No one knew men better in every-day life; but he did not

so well know *man*, when placed in uncommon and untried situations.

A remarkable distinction between him and Burke was, that the latter, though educated like a philosopher, and often teaching with the wisdom of one, rejected all theory opposed to experience, in treating of the practical business of the state. While Fox, brought up as a man of the world, and always declaiming as such, appeared in practice often inclined to play the mere philosopher. Though equally grand in his views, he had not the same knowledge, the same caution, the same penetration as Burke, to foresee their results. What he clearly saw, no man could better describe, but his eye did not take in the whole moral horizon; he was impatient of that labour of meditation and of calculation which distinguished his celebrated friend and political instructor.

By many persons, his political life has been called a failure, inasmuch as he attained for no time that power for which he had all his life contended:—as the credit of opposing the American war was chiefly due to Burke as principal, and as pointing out the way for him to pursue, and to his constant teaching and prompting on the subject; as on the question of the French Revolution, the next great measure of his life, he was overpowered by the superior powers of the latter both at the moment of contest and ultimately in the more statesman-like views taken of it by his old master:—he was therefore left a leader almost without a party, a general without an army; public opinion having then, and ever since, cast the

strongest reflections on his political wisdom and general conduct in that momentous crisis.

Much also has been said of his opposition to the cause of America, to that of the Dissenters, to that of Mr. Wilkes, to the rights of Juries, and in fact to every popular topic between the years 1769 and 1774; and of his coalitions, his sacrifices sometimes to popularity, sometimes to obtain party superiority, as indicative of continual inconsistencies of conduct; and that in fact Lord North made him a patriot by dismissing him with circumstances of personal indignity in 1774, from being a Lord of the Treasury.

Let it be remembered, however, that he was then young; neither let us press public men too hardly on the point of seeming inconsistency. They are believed by the people to sin in this respect much more than they themselves can admit, and more than they themselves conscientiously believe; and the reason is, that the change or modification of opinion proceeds in their minds gradually and imperceptibly to its completion, while to the public, who know nothing of the operation going on, it comes suddenly and unexpectedly.

But after all, is there any point on which a statesman may not conscientiously think differently at different times? Is there any one who has all his life, in office and out of office, expressed precisely the same sentiments upon all the same subjects? Is there a man of any description whose opinions, on many topics, have not, at some period of his life, changed? He who says the contrary deceives himself, or wishes to deceive others. The human mind

does not start into maturity at once armed at all points like Minerva from the head of Jupiter; it is progressive in the attainment of wisdom; and though the last actions of our lives may not be the wisest, there is as little doubt that men generally, as they advance in life, become wiser.

The active occupations of Burke in Parliament at this time, and the union of the different branches of the opposition, are alluded to by him in a letter to his cousin, February 8th, 1770, from Fludyer-street, Westminster—

"My dear Garret,

"I am much obliged to you for your letter, which I had time to answer as fully as it deserves. But it came to me in the opening of a very hot and active session; our minority gets strength daily; and uses it hitherto with spirit. If there was any event which could be particularly pleasing or interesting to you, I would acquaint you with it; but at present nothing is decided. Lord Chatham has appeared again, and with as much splendour as ever. All the parts of the opposition are well united and go on in concert."

From the contentions of public, to the kindly feelings of private life, it is delightful to follow him; and to omit the following appeal in favour of a poor and distressed, to an angry and richer relative, would be to sin against all the charities of the heart. It is addressed to his Cousin Garret, from Gregories, shortly before this time—

"About two months ago your brother James

called upon me; until then I knew nothing of his having been in London. He was extremely poor, in a bad state of health, and with a wife, to all appearance, as wretched and sickly as he, and big with child into the bargain. It was evident enough that with his epileptic distemper, he was very unfit to get his bread by hard labour. To maintain them here would be very heavy to me; more indeed than I could bear, with the very many other calls I have upon me, of the same as well as of other kinds. So I thought the better way would be to send them back to their own county, where, by allowing them a small matter, we might enable them to live. My brother was of the same opinion; so we provided them for the journey homewards; and nothing but the hurry I mentioned, prevented my desiring you to give him, on my account, wherewithal to buy some little furniture and a couple of cows. I then thought to have allowed him ten pounds a year. His wife told me that with a little assistance she could earn something; and thus it might be possible for them to subsist.

"This day I got a letter from him, in which the poor man tells me he is more distressed than ever; and that you showed great resentment to him, so far as even to refuse to give him any thing that I should appoint for him. I can readily excuse the first effect of warmth in an affair that must touch you so nearly. But you must naturally recollect that his indigent circumstances, his unfortunate marriage, and the weakness of his mind, which was in a great measure the cause of both, make him a just object of pity, and not of anger; and that his

relation to us neither confers on you nor me any right whatsoever to add to his affliction and punishment—but rather calls upon us to do all the little good offices in our power to alleviate his misfortunes.

" A little reflection will make you sensible of this; I, therefore, wish you would not only give him now six or seven guineas on my account, but that you would, by yourself or some friend, take care that it should be laid out in the manner most beneficial for him, and not entrusted to his own management. If you are not near him, I dare say, Dav. Crotty or Jack Nagle would look to his settlement. I can have no improper view in this ; no more than in the other affair which I earnestly recommended to you, and offered my assistance to conclude.—But you very justly, I suppose, paid no regard to my opinions or wishes; I hope you will have no reason to be dissatisfied with what you have resolved on that occasion * * * * * *.

" You remember the usual allowance I have made for these two or three years to some poor persons in your county. You will be so obliging to continue it to them according to my plan of last year, which you can refer to or remember. You will not scruple to advance this for me; and I do not doubt but your good nature will prevail on you to take the trouble.

" As to my farming—I go on pretty well. All my wheat is in the ground this month past; which is more than some of my neighbours have been able to compass on account of the wetness of the season."

In this year Mr. Richard Burke re-visited Grenada. The domestic affections of Edmund, which were always particularly sensitive and in this instance felt some alarm from the insalubrity of the climate, experienced alleviation in the promising progress of his own son, then at Westminster School, of whom, to the last moment of his life, he was as proud as he was fond. William Burke thus repeats the usual praises of the admiring father, which some of his surviving friends will remember as being even then remarkably warm—"Ned's little boy is every thing we could wish, good in his person, excellent in temper and disposition, attentive and diligent in his studies beyond his years. He has read Virgil and Horace, and some prose writers. He has gone through about four books of Homer, and is reading Lucian with really a scientific knowledge of Greek."

A petition to the King from the freeholders of Buckinghamshire, praying for a new Parliament, in consequence of the odium excited against the existing one by the decision on the Middlesex election and other unpopular acts, was drawn up and presented by Mr. Burke.

A great effort, tending to the same purpose, and meant to point out the general errors of government, was his famous pamphlet, "Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents," brought out in this year; the most masterly thing of the kind in our language, excepting his own work on the French Revolution; a source of interest and information to every statesman; and a species of text-book then and at all times for the Whig connexion. It was not merely meant as an occasional piece, but for the

instruction of posterity, by the constitutional tendency of its general views, the depth and truth of its observations, which, with the eloquence of the style, impart that conviction of genius and wisdom which we feel in perusing all his works.

In this piece will be found the germ of the leading doctrines which distinguished him in after-life; holding a mean between the extremes of what were considered the popular and the Court doctrines. Of Lord Bute he speaks with a candour and moderation which scarcely any other public man thought it necessary to observe; the attack on the secret manœuvres of the Court, from a statesman labouring for power, indicated an unusual degree of political courage; nor did some opinions broached by the more democratical writers meet with more ceremonious treatment from him, for which the adherents of Ministry on one side, and Mrs. Macauley of republican notoriety on the other, lost no time in attacking him. Against Parliamentary Reform he urges very ingenious and very solid objections; and his defence of party connexions has never been answered; putting to silence the hitherto common reproach applied to most public characters, of being party-men.

The "False Alarm" by Johnson, on the other side of the question, appeared not only without effect, but when compared with its opponent, to considerable disadvantage. No political feeling interfered with their private friendship. The good offices of both had been exerted towards the end of the preceding year in favour of Baretti, who had been tried for stabbing a man in the Haymarket by whom he had been attacked; when in consulting on

the best mode of making his defence, Johnson's usual love of dictation, even to Burke, appeared in contradicting him with an undue degree of warmth; an error, however, which he acknowledged with the same frankness; for on being reminded of his heat, he said, "It may be so, sir, for Burke and I should have been of one opinion, if we had had no audience."

The session 1770—1771 which opened on the 13th of November of the former year, was a busy and important one, chiefly occupied by domestic matters. Never perhaps was party spirit and general disquiet more prevalent in the kingdom except when in a state of actual disturbance; but of the speeches of Mr. Burke, though continually praised, no full, or even tolerably full, report is preserved from his entrance into Parliament until 1774, except, as has been suggested, they be found among the papers of Sir H. Cavendish, who was in the habit of taking pretty copious notes.

One of the first topics on which he dilated, after attacking Ministers in the debate on the Address, was (27th November) on the power of filing ex-officio informations by the Attorney General, as applied to the case of Almon, who was prosecuted for publishing the letter of Junius to the King, which other booksellers had done with impunity. In this he characterized that writer in terms which first turned from himself the suspicion of being the writer, it not being believed that such a man would descend to praise himself.

"How comes this Junius to have broke through the cobwebs of the law, and to range uncontroled, unpunished through the land? The myrmidons of the court have been long, and are still, pursuing him

in vain. They will not spend their time upon me, or upon you, when the mighty boar of the forest that has broke through all their toils is before them. But what will all their efforts avail? No sooner has he wounded one, than he strikes down another dead at his feet. For my own part, when I saw his attack upon the King, I own my blood ran cold. I thought he had ventured too far, and that there was an end of his triumphs; not that he had not asserted many bold truths. Yes, Sir, there are in that composition many bold truths by which a wise prince might profit. It was the rancour and venom with which I was struck. But while I expected from this daring flight his final ruin and fall, behold him rising still higher and coming down souse upon both Houses of Parliament. Yes, he made you his quarry, and you still bleed from the effects of his talons. You crouched, and still crouch beneath his rage. Nor has he dreaded the terrors of your brow,* Sir, for he has attacked even you, and I believe you have no reason to triumph in the encounter. Not content with carrying away our royal eagle in his pounces and dashing him against a rock, he has laid you prostrate, and King, Lords, and Commons thus become but the sport of his fury. Were he a member of this House, what might not be expected from his knowledge, his firmness and his integrity. He would be easily known by his contempt of all danger, by his penetration and by his vigour. Nothing would escape his vigilance and activity. Bad ministers could

* Sir Fletcher Norton, the Speaker, who was distinguished by a pair of large black eye-brows.

conceal nothing from his sagacity, nor could promises nor threats induce him to conceal any thing from the public."

Comparing the letters of this writer with the North Briton as to their force of composition and power over the public mind, he termed the latter mere milk and water papers; and, on another occasion, "a mixture of vinegar and water, at once sour and vapid."

To a motion by Serjeant Glynn for an inquiry into the administration of criminal justice in Westminster Hall, December 6th, he gave his support, yet reprobated the asperity of reproach applied to Lord Mansfield, for which he was called to account in the public journals; and among his papers is the draught of a letter addressed, or meant to be addressed, to one of them in explanation of the principle of the law of libel, and repelling the charge of giving more credit than he deserved to the unpopular Chief Justice of the King's Bench, in the following terms.

"It is not true that Mr. Burke spoke in praise of Lord Mansfield. If he had found any thing in Lord Mansfield praiseworthy, I fancy he is not disposed to make an apology to any body for doing justice. Your correspondent's reason for asserting it is visible enough; and it is altogether in the strain of other misrepresentations. That gentleman spoke decently of the judges, and he did no more; most of the gentlemen who debated on both sides held the same language; and nobody will think their zeal the less warm, or the less effectual, because it is not attended with scurrility and virulence."

Two bills, one for ascertaining the rights of electors in choosing their representatives, February 7th; the other those of juries in prosecutions for libel, March 7th, brought him vigorously forward in their favour. The latter, though introduced as Mr. Dowdeswell's, was Mr. Burke's own bill, which Mr. Fox copied nearly to the letter in his bill of 1791, without any acknowledgment; the former even at this time anticipating the public voice of the country by requiring that the jury should be considered judges both of the law and the fact. Fragments of his speeches on these subjects appear in his works.

The affair of Falkland's Islands furnished the theme of several others; one particularly before the Christmas recess, said by the reports of those who heard him to have been "in the highest strain of oratory;" and one in January equally distinguished for sarcastic ridicule; a talent in which he excelled all his contemporaries, and often exerted with striking effect. Opposition were much blamed for their intemperate conduct on this subject, but perhaps without justice; for it is now known that by a secret agreement between Spain and France in 1763, they had become pledged to a war with England to recover their lost credit and territories, whenever their finances permitted; and the necessities of the latter alone prevented the dispute from becoming the ostensible cause of such war at this moment.

To this immediately succeeded the important contest between the House of Commons and the City Magistrates on the question of the printers giving the proceedings in Parliament, which, arising from the cupidity of a few obscure individuals, terminated

in securing one of the greatest constitutional privileges gained since the Revolution,—the tacit liberty of publishing the debates.

Mr. Burke embraced the popular side of the question with his accustomed zeal and ability; and when at length the house confessed itself conquered, by adjourning over the day on which Mr. Wilkes was ordered to attend, he did not cease to pursue their resolutions with reproach and ridicule. On the 2d of April, in company with the Dukes of Portland and Manchester, Marquis of Rockingham, Earl Fitzwilliam, Lord King, and others, he paid a formal visit to the Lord Mayor and Alderman Oliver in the Tower. A proposition by Alderman Sawbridge to shorten the duration of Parliaments was with equal decision opposed by him as inexpedient and uncalled for by the sense of the country; the substance of the speech has a place in his works.

In the spring of the year, Barry, who had executed two or three paintings for his patron while abroad, returned from Italy filled with impressions of the superiority of his art, a strong taste for virtû, and having also unfortunately contracted a more noxious disposition too often imbibed by long residence on the continent—an inclination to Deism. Mr. Burke, with the activity of a true friend, immediately assailed this opinion with the most powerful arguments and a few good books, particularly Bishop Butler's Analogy, and by these means succeeded in fixing the painter's belief in revealed religion. It is a memorable instance of the envenomed spirit abroad against this distinguished man, long afterwards, for his opposition to revolutionary France, that among

other slanderous accusations of the day, was that of having been given to deistical raillery.

His acquaintance with Dr. Beattie, who had arrived in London during the summer, preceded by the fame of his "Minstrel," and "Essay on Truth," perhaps incited him more strongly to convince the artist of his error; the latter work he and Johnson praised highly for its support of religion in opposition to the sceptical metaphysics of Hume. Burke's opinion of metaphysicians is given with characteristic force in the letter to a Noble Lord, when speaking of the Philosophers of the National Convention.

"Nothing can be conceived more hard than the heart of a thorough-bred metaphysician. It comes nearer to the cold malignity of a wicked spirit than to the frailty and passion of a man. It is like that of the principle of evil himself, incorporeal, pure, unmixed, dephlegmated, defacated evil." Beattie's opinion of the science is not more favourable:—"It is the bane of true learning, true taste, and true science; to it we owe all modern scepticism and atheism; it has a bad effect upon the human faculties, and tends not a little to sour the temper, to subvert good principles, and to disqualify men for the business of life."

In September 1771, Goldsmith, writing to Mr. Langton, thus alludes to their friend's usual occupation:—"Burke is a farmer, *en attendant* a better place, but visiting about too," and in proof of the orator's farming propensities to which the poet thus alludes, the following scientific passage on bacon and hogs in a letter to his cousin about this time, deserves to be recorded.

"We have had the most rainy and stormy season that has been known. I have got my wheat into ground better than some others; that is about four and twenty acres; I proposed having about ten more, but, considering the season, this is tolerable. Wheat bears a tolerable price, though a good deal fallen: it is forty-two shillings the quarter, that is two of your barrels. Barley twenty-four shillings. Peas very high, twenty-seven to thirty shillings the quarter; so that our bacon will come dear to us this season. I have put up four hogs. I killed one yesterday which weighed a little more than twelve score. Of the other three, one is now near fifteen score, the other about twelve. I shall put up seven now for pickled pork; these weigh when fit to kill near seven score a piece. To what weight do you generally feed bacon hogs in your part of the country? Here they generally fat them to about fourteen or fifteen score. In Berkshire, near us, they carry them to twenty-five and thirty score.

"I am now going into some new method, having contracted with a London seedsman for early white peas at a guinea a barrel. These I shall sow in drills in February, dunging the ground for them. They will be off early enough to sow turnips. Thus I shall save a fallow without, I think, in the least injuring my ground, and get a good return besides. A crop of such peas will be nearly as valuable as a crop of wheat; and they do not exhaust the soil; so little, that as far as my experience goes, they are not much inferior to a fallow. I will let you know my success in due time.

* * * * *

"I heard not long since from my brother, who was, thank God, very well. Let me hear from you as soon as you can. Whenever I wrote, I forgot to desire you to give a guinea from Lare * to her father at Killivellen—for my delay be so good to give him half a guinea more."

The following passage in another letter gives us an idea of the very distant terms he was on with Lord Shelburne, even from their first acquaintance in politics—and this coolness increased as they advanced in their career.

Mr. Garret Nagle, it seems, wished to become agent to some of his Lordship's Irish estates; an office not disdained to be eagerly solicited by many of the country gentlemen of Ireland of our own day, to absentee and even resident noblemen. After stating his inclination to do all in his power for a young relative who wished to go to India; and a long passage on farming affairs, he goes on to say—

"Now I will say a word or two on your own business, concerning the agency you mentioned. Lord Sh. has been for many years very polite to me; and that is all. I have no interest with him whatsoever; for which reason, when I received your letter, I thought it best to speak to Barré who is in close connexion with him. He had not then heard of Parker's death. He told me that he seldom or never interfered in Lord Shelburne's private affairs, and believed, that if he should on this occasion, it could have no effect, but he said he would try; and

* One of his servants.

that if there was any prospect of success he would let me know it. He has said nothing to me since."

Another letter some time subsequent to this, which would occupy, if transcribed, five or six pages, is wholly filled with farming affairs, more especially on the culture of the turnip, its risques, advantages, and disadvantages. For this detail (he says) he has chosen a wet day, in which he can do nothing out of doors; and being addressed to a farmer, a more appropriate time or topic could not be chosen. From his account it appears he had nearly thirty acres in turnips, and in the preceding year, no less than one hundred and ten loads of natural hay; clover hay, he adds, sold then from thirty to thirty-six shillings the load. The truth of a remark upon cultivation will be immediately recognised by the practical farmer. "I am satisfied that no cheap method of tillage can be a good one. All profit of lands is derived from manure and labour; and neither of them, much less both of them, can be had but at a dear rate. I should not even consider the cheapness of labour in any particular part as a very great advantage. It is something without doubt. But then I have always found that labour of men is nearly in proportion to their pay. Here we are sixpence a day lower than within a few miles of London; yet I look upon the work there to be in effect nearly as reasonable as here; it is in all respects so much better and so much more expeditiously done."

In the month of November 1771, his acquaintance with American affairs was rewarded by the appointment of Agent to the State of New York, worth nearly 700*l.* per annum, which, though it

tended on all future occasions to give him the most correct views of American affairs, diminished perhaps the effect of his oratory in the House, and of his wisdom out of doors, from an illiberal surmise that his advice might not be wholly disinterested. It was of course no gift of Government.

The next session, 1772, was short, and produced little of importance. A petition, February 6th, from 250 clergymen of the Establishment, and several members of the professions of law and physic, praying to be relieved from subscription to the 39 Articles, and called, from their place of meeting, the Feather's Tavern Association, he opposed, in conjunction with ministry, against the opinions of nearly all his own party, on the plea, among other reasons, that while *the associators professed to belong to the Establishment, and profited by it,* no hardship could be implied in requiring some common bond of agreement, such as the subscription in question, among its members.

Acting upon the same principle he ably supported a motion soon afterwards, April 3d, made to relieve Dissenting Ministers who *neither agreed with the Church, nor participated in its emoluments,* from this test; and it was carried through the Commons by a great majority, though rejected by the Lords. The Royal Marriage Act he opposed. A bill to quiet the possessions of the subject against dormant claims of the Church, introduced the 17th of February, found in him a powerful though unsuccessful advocate, on the same principle as the Nullum Tempus Act against dormant claims of the Crown; fragments of some of these speeches are given in his works. A bill for the Relief of Pro-

testant Dissenters, to whom he always displayed the utmost liberality and regard, being introduced the succeeding session (1773), he supported it in a long and most ably-argued speech, against some petitions of the Methodist body from Chatham, who, though known as schismatics themselves, deprecated indulgence to any others of the same class, and were therefore severely handled by Mr. Burke. His exertions on this and previous occasions touching ecclesiastical matters, exciting some suspicion of his orthodoxy among a few over-zealous Churchmen, the delivery of the following passage in this speech drew very warm and general applause; an outline of the whole, which is well worthy of perusal by those who take an interest in the question, may be seen in his works, vol. x.

"At the same time that I would cut up the very root of Atheism, I would respect all conscience; all conscience that is really such, and which perhaps its very tenderness proves to be sincere. I wish to see the Established Church of England great and powerful; I wish to see her foundations laid low and deep, that she may crush the giant powers of rebellious darkness; I would have her head raised up to that Heaven to which she conducts us. I would have her open wide her hospitable gates by a noble and liberal comprehension, but I would have no breaches in her wall; I would have her cherish all those who are within, and pity all those who are without; I would have her a common blessing to the world, an example, if not an instructor, to those who have not the happiness to belong to her; I would have her give a lesson of peace to mankind, that a vexed and wandering generation might be

taught to seek for repose and toleration in the maternal bosom of Christian charity, and not in the harlot lap of infidelity and indifference. Nothing has driven people more into that house of seduction than the mutual hatred of Christian congregations. Long may we enjoy our Church under a learned and edifying episcopacy."

He also took a considerable share in Colonel Burgoyne's motion, April 3d, for a select committee on East India affairs; and again, April 13th, in a committee of the whole House, on a series of resolutions moved by Mr. Pownall, to regulate the importation and exportation of corn; a matter upon which he seems to have had as clear views as the political economists of the present day, though neither he nor they have had the good fortune to persuade the country gentlemen to adopt the same opinions. The following is part of an eulogium passed upon his speech at the time:—

"He then replied to the several doubts and difficulties which had been raised, in an excellent speech, full of that knowledge which he possesses of these matters; and explained with that clearness of which he is master, the effects both of supply and trade; and showed the united interests of the landed and commercial parts of this country: that nothing would be more detrimental than their jealousies of each other; and, on the contrary, nothing so advantageous, generally and individually, as their united efforts for their mutual benefit."

On the budget, discussed May 1st; on a bill to regulate the internal government of the African Company; and on some amendments made by the

Lords in a money clause in the corn bill, he also took part, lamenting, on the latter occasion, a violent disagreement which had taken place between the Houses, and pointing out forbearance and temper to the Commons as the most dignified mode of reply to the insults received from the peers. The bill itself, as infringing upon the rights of the House in money matters, was tossed over the table, and kicked by members on both sides of the question along the floor as they went out.

Mr. Boswell, in his amusing volumes, records that Dr. Johnson, in conversation, once made a gross *bull;* and, as a faithful chronicler, it must not be concealed by the present writer that Mr. Burke, in the debate on the budget this year, used the same figure of speech, to the great amusement of the House; having however the pleas of his *country*, and the heat of argument, to urge in extenuation of this slip of the tongue.

"The Minister," said he, "comes down in state, attended by his creatures of all denominations, beasts clean and unclean; for the treasury, as it has been managed of late, is worse than Noah's ark. With such however as they are, he comes down, opens his budget, and edifies us all with his speech. Well; he sits down. What is the consequence? *One half* of the House goes away. A gentleman on the opposite side gets up and harangues on the state of the nation; and in order to keep matters even, *another half* retires at the close of his speech. A third gentleman follows their example and rids the House of *another half*—(*a loud laugh through the House.*) 'Sir,' said he, turning the laugh with some address and humour, 'I take the blunder to

myself, and express my satisfaction at having said any thing that can put the House in good humour.'"

In the summer, and again in 1773, he visited France, where Maria Antoinette appeared in that glow of splendour and of youthful beauty which, when afterwards depicted by his pen, drew the compassion and sympathies of Europe. All the chief of those coteries, since so much celebrated in literary history, were opened to receive him, but their prevailing spirit, in politics as well as in religion, excited in his mind a strong degree of aversion, and he formed but few acquaintance at this time, some of whom were among the ecclesiastics.

Never perhaps were there seen together in one capital, at one time, so many men, and even women, of extraordinary intellectual powers. But the lustre which they cast upon every department of science and literature, was scarcely more remarkable than the perversion of mind which led them to despise the first and greatest bonds which hold society together. They valued every thing but religion; they practised every thing but morality; infidelity and vice were the only links of union; and the mass, splendid as it was, formed but a species of moral dung-heap, rotten and stinking at heart, but luminous on the surface by the very excess of its putrefaction.

Mr. Burke felt alarm and disgust at what he saw, particularly as this union against morals seemed backed by an equal antipathy to all existing institutions of their own country. In the very next session of Parliament he pointed out "this conspiracy of Atheism to the watchful jealousy of governments; and though not fond of calling in the aid of the secular arm to suppress doctrines and opinions, yet if ever it

was raised it should be against those enemies of their kind, who would take from man the noblest prerogative of his nature, that of being a religious animal. Already under the systematic attacks of these men I see many of the props of good government beginning to fail. I see propagated principles which will not leave to religion even a toleration, and make virtue herself less than a name :" memorable words, indeed, when we remember their literal fulfilment.

Nearly the whole of the next session (1772—1773) except an animated speech on the navy estimates, and that on the relief of Protestant dissenters just alluded to, was occupied in discussing the affairs of the East India Company, in which the labour of Mr. Burke in debate, and the extent of his acquaintance with the subject, were avowed by some of the Directors, Members of the House, to be very honourable to his industry. A commission of supervision was at length ordered to be sent out against all the efforts of Opposition, though Lord North did not hesitate to profit by a variety of other suggestions thrown out by Mr. Burke, its leader: he always professed admiration of his talents, and, it was more than once said, would have been glad to secure his assistance, or his silence, on any terms that he chose to propose. It is certain that a short time before this, a question was put to Mr. Burke, through some of the leading people at the India House, whether he was willing to go out at the head of a commission for revising the whole interior administration of India. The bait, which was tempting even to a man of the most sturdy integrity, insured to him wealth without requiring any renunciation of party connexion; but, again, his personal,

and, what he thought more of, his family interests, were sacrificed to unbending principle.

"I attest Heaven and earth," said he, in debate at the time, "that in all places, and at all times, I have steadfastly shoved aside the gilded hand of corruption, and endeavoured to stem the torrent which threatens to overwhelm this island;" adding, on another occasion—"I know the political map of England as well as the Noble Lord (North), or as any other person; and I know that the way I take is not the path to preferment."

"I know indeed," said he, in the first debate on the affairs of the Company (Dec. 7, 1772), "that the same qualifications now-a-days make a good Member of Parliament, that formerly made a good monk. '*Tria faciunt monachum—Bene loqui de superiore—legere breviarum taliter qualiter—et sinere res vadere ut vadunt.*' In English—Speak well of the Minister—Read the lesson he sets you, *taliter qualiter*, and let the state take care of itself—*sinere res vadere ut vadunt.*" This irreverent allusion to so essential a part of Popery, might almost have satisfied Sir William Bagott himself of the little respect for its forms entertained by the speaker.

The hold which he had acquired of public opinion, and the lead which he had taken in the popular branch of the Legislature, were the best evidences of his importance and powers, considering that in the latter no favour, and scarcely even toleration, is given to any man who does not by unquestioned talents conquer his way to it.

The House of Commons is in many respects an extraordinary assembly. It is not only the leading branch of the Legislature, the immediate organ and

purse-bearer of the people, the jealous guardian of the Constitution, the chosen temple of fame, as Burke himself termed it, the main avenue to honours and power, but it is especially the great touchstone of talents for public business. A man may often deceive himself or mislead others on the real extent of his abilities for such employment, but he can rarely impose upon this body; few know of what they are capable when they enter into it, and few come out without having found their just weight in the political balance. It does not therefore merely serve to make a man great, but if he be really deficient in the qualities of a great statesman, it is sure to render him little; elsewhere it may be difficult to draw this invidious distinction; but there it is done silently though effectually.

It is in vain, from the number of penetrating eyes, quick ears, emulative and jealous feelings, subtle and powerful understandings directed to all the proceedings of a member, that incapacity can hope to escape detection, or mediocrity seize the palm of excellence. A dull man will soon be neglected, a superficial one seen through, a vain one laughed at, and an ignorant one despised. There is, perhaps, no earthly ordeal for statesmen so trying as this; and no abilities which, by passing through it with celebrity, may not be taken as sterling.

But in addition to these it serves other useful purposes; it is the great purger and purifier of opinions. No person of moderate capacity desirous of being instructed, or of gaining from the experience of older senators what they have partly gained from their predecessors, can sit there long without being wiser, or, if not, the presumption is against his

understanding. If he be at all open to conviction new lights will break in upon him on most subjects of dispute; his prejudices, his pre-conceived and imperfect notions, will be one by one removed, to be re-arranged in more perfect combinations elaborated in this school of practical wisdom.

Nor is it less serviceable as the scourge of political quackery; for a conceited or turbulent man, who may assume a high tone with the public at large, on the infallibility of his remedies for the national evils, no sooner goes there than he sinks into insignificance. The decorum, and the awe inspired by the place, commonly strike him dumb, and while silent he is safe; but if once tempted to give vent to his crudities, he is instantly assaulted by the united powers of eloquence, argument, and ridicule; and beaten, if not out of the House, at least out of notice. Presumption and dogmatism, on public topics, deserve and meet with no mercy there; and schemes, which for a time mislead even sensible men out of doors, are no sooner touched by the Ithuriel's spear of the House of Commons, than their folly or mischief becomes evident. Yet persons are sometimes found even there wholly incurable; impenetrable to reasoning and insensible to contempt, to whom the knife and the cautery are applied in vain; but the exceptions only prove the rule.

A tax on absentees, proposed in the Irish Parliament at this time by Mr. Flood, then a Member of that Administration, and approved by Ministry in England, drew an able letter, now inserted in his works, from Mr. Burke to Sir Charles Bingham, in Dublin, who had expressly written for his opinion on the subject. This opinion proved decidedly against it.

Lord Charlemont, and other friends to the proposal, were pretty well converted by his arguments; and being seconded by a representation to Lord North from some of the chief proprietors resident in England, on the injustice of the measure, caused it to be abandoned.

His arguments on this question appear so forcible that perhaps they are not to be answered, at least the writer never has seen any serious attempt to refute them. Absenteeism is an old grievance of Ireland; and at the present moment the cry against it being stronger perhaps than ever, this letter is well worthy of consideration, as proving that whatever be the remedy for the evil, a direct tax of ten per cent. on non-resident landlords, as was then proposed, is not the most eligible. Some of the points to which he adverts may be quoted—

"Do you, or does any Irish gentleman think it a mean privilege, that, the moment he sets his foot upon this ground, he is, to all intents and purposes, an Englishman? You will not be pleased with a law, which by its operation tends to disqualify you from a seat in this Parliament; and if your own virtue or fortune, or if that of your children, should carry you or them to it, should you like to be excluded from the possibility of a peerage in this kingdom? If in Ireland we lay it down as a maxim, that a residence in Great Britain is a political evil, and to be discouraged by penal taxes, you must necessarily reject all the privileges and benefits which are connected with such a residence.

"I can easily conceive, that a citizen of Dublin, who looks no further than his counter, may think, that Ireland will be repaid for such a loss by any small diminution of taxes, or any increase in the

circulation of money, that may be laid out in the purchase of claret or groceries in his corporation. In such a man an error of that kind, as it would be natural, would be excusable. But I cannot think, that any educated man, any man who looks with an enlightened eye on the interest of Ireland, can believe, that it is not highly for the advantage of Ireland, that this Parliament which, whether right or wrong, whether we will or not, will make some laws to bind Ireland, should always have in it some persons who, by connexion, by property, or by early prepossessions and affections, are attached to the welfare of that country.

"I am so clear upon this point, not only from the clear reason of the thing, but from the constant course of my observation, by now having sat eight sessions in Parliament, that I declare it to you, as my sincere opinion, that (if you must do either the one or the other) it would be wiser by far, and far better for Ireland, that some new privileges should attend the estates of Irishmen, Members of the two Houses here, than that their characters should be stained by penal impositions, and their properties loaded by unequal and unheard of modes of taxation. I do really trust that, when the matter comes a little to be considered, a majority of our gentlemen will never consent to establish such a principle of disqualification against themselves and their posterity, and for the sake of gratifying the schemes of a transitory Administration of the Cockpit or the Castle, or in compliance with the lightest part of the most vulgar and transient popularity, fix so irreparable an injury on the permanent interest of their country.

"This law seems, therefore, to me to go directly

against the fundamental points of the legislative and judicial constitution of these kingdoms, and against the happy communion of their privileges. But there is another matter in the tax proposed, that contradicts as essentially a very great principle necessary for preserving the union of the various parts of a state; because it does, in effect, discountenance mutual intermarriage and inheritance; things that bind countries more closely together than any laws or constitutions whatsoever. Is it right that a woman, who marries into Ireland, and perhaps well purchases her jointure or her dower there, should not, after her husband's death, have it in her choice to return to her country and her friends without being taxed for it?

"If any Irish heiress should marry into an English family, and that great property in both countries should thereby come to be united in this common issue, shall the descendant of that marriage abandon his natural connexion, his family interests, his public and his private duties, and be compelled to take up his residence in Ireland? Is there any sense or any justice in it, unless you affirm, that there should be no such intermarriage, and no such mutual inheritance between the natives? Is there a shadow of reason, that, because a Lord Rockingham, a Duke of Devonshire, a Sir George Saville, possess property in Ireland, which has descended to them without any act of theirs, should abandon their duty in Parliament, and spend the winters in Dublin? or, having spent the session in Westminster, must they abandon their seats and all their family interests in Yorkshire and Derbyshire, and pass the rest of that year in Wicklow, in Cork, or Tyrone?

"See what the consequences must be from a municipal Legislature considering itself as an unconnected body, and attempting to enforce a partial residence. A man may have property in more parts than two of this empire. He may have property in Jamaica and North America, as well as in England and Ireland. I know some that have property in all of them. What shall we say to this case? After the poor distracted citizen of the whole empire has, in compliance with your partial law, removed his family, bid adieu to his connections, and settled himself quietly and snug in a pretty box by the Liffey, he hears that the Parliament of Great Britain is of opinion, that all English estates ought to be spent in England, and that they will tax him double if he does not return.

"Suppose him, then (if the nature of the two laws will permit it) providing a flying camp, and dividing his year, as well as he can, between England and Ireland, and at the charge of two town houses, and two country houses, in both kingdoms; in this situation he receives an account, that a law is transmitted from Jamaica, and another from Pennsylvania, to tax absentees from these provinces, which are impoverished by the European residence of the possessors of their lands. How is he to escape this ricochet cross-firing of so many opposite batteries of police and regulation? If he attempts to comply, he is likely to be more a citizen of the Atlantic Ocean and the Irish Sea, than of any of these countries. The matter is absurd and ridiculous; and while ever the idea of mutual marriages, inheritances, purchases and privileges subsist, can never be carried into execution with common sense or common justice.

" I do not know how gentlemen of Ireland reconcile such an idea to their own liberties, or to the natural use and enjoyment of their estates. If any of their children should be left in a minority, and a guardian should think, as many do (it matters not whether properly or no), that his ward had better be educated in a school or university here, than in Ireland, is he sure that he can justify the bringing a tax of ten per cent., perhaps twenty, on his pupil's estate, by giving what, in his opinion, is the best education in general, or the best for that pupil's particular character and circumstances? Can he justify his sending him to travel, a necessary part of the higher style of education, and, notwithstanding what some narrow writers have said, of great benefit to all countries, but very particularly so to Ireland? Suppose a guardian, under the authority or pretence of such a tax of police, had prevented our dear friend, Lord Charlemont, from going abroad, would he have lost no satisfaction? Would his friends have lost nothing in the companion? Would his country have lost nothing in the cultivated taste with which he has adorned it in so many ways? His natural elegance of mind would undoubtedly do a great deal; but I will venture to assert, without the danger of being contradicted, that he adorns his present residence in Ireland much the more for having resided a long time out of it.

" Will Mr. Flood himself think he ought to have been driven by taxes into Ireland, whilst he prepared himself, by an English education, to understand and to defend the rights of the subject in Ireland, or to support the dignity of Government there, according as his opinions, or the situation of things, may lead

him to take either part, upon respectable principles? I hope it is not forgot, that an Irish Act of Parliament sends its youth to England for the study of the law, and compels a residence in the inns of court here for some years. Will you send out with one breath, and recall with another? This Act plainly provides for that intercourse, which supposes the strictest union in laws and policy, in both which the intended tax supposes an entire separation."

The general insubordination to all lawful authority at Boston, and the destruction of the tea sent thither because it was to pay duty, made the session of 1774 an important one, from the measures adopted by Ministry against the refractory port and province of Massachusets. A general feeling prevailed here, even among many members of opposition, that some punishment was necessary. Mr. Burke, however, though unsupported by his party, declared decidedly against the Boston Port Bill, deprecating it in the most solemn manner, as partial, severe, unjust towards the innocent, fraught with danger to our authority, and threatening to bring the question of force at once to issue: "Never," said he, "did any thing give me more heart-felt sorrow than the present measure." And it proved, as he expected it would, the great turning point of American politics; but, strange to say, scarcely another man of talents in the House viewed the proceeding with the same alarm that he did; another most memorable instance of his profound political penetration.

His private letters at all times speak nearly the same language as his public speeches, and the sprinkling of American politics, as well as the allusion to the harshness shown towards Dr. Franklin

before the Privy Council, contained in the following letter of Mr. Burke to the famous General Lee, then in the colonies, but not yet suspected of intending to join their cause, will not be thought uninteresting—

"DEAR SIR,

"I received two letters from you; one by Mr. Hay, the other by the packet. I thank you most sincerely for both.—Your first was particularly acceptable, as it gave me an opportunity of renewing and improving my acquaintance with a gentleman for whose character I have always had an high esteem. My particular friends were the first who took notice of his merit. They imagined that they could not do a better service to government in a newly acquired French country than to send them one of the best samples we were able to furnish of plain, manly English sense and integrity. I wish those who rule at present may show by the provision they make for him here, that such qualifications are still in some request among ourselves.

"It was extremely kind of you to remember your friends in our dull worn-out hemisphere, among the infinite objects of curiosity that are so exuberantly spread out before you in the vast field of America. There is indeed abundant matter, both natural and political, to give full scope to a mind active and enterprising like yours; *where so much has been done and undone; and where still there is an ample range for wisdom and mistake;*—either must produce considerable effects in an affair of such extent and importance. *It would be no light mischief, and*

no trivial benefit. When one considers what might be done there, it is truly miserable to think of its present distracted condition. But as the errors which have brought things into that state of confusion are not likely to be corrected by any influence of ours upon either side of the water, it is not wise to speculate too much on the subject. It can have no effect but to make ourselves uneasy, without any possible advantage to the public.

"Here, as we have met, so we continue, in the most perfect repose. It has been announced to us that we are to have no business but the gold coin. This has not appeared as yet; and if there be nothing further than we hear of intended, it will come on time enough. The politics of the continent which used to engage your attention so much, attracts no part of ours. Whether the American affairs will be brought before us is yet uncertain.

"Saturday, I heard the Massachuset's petition against their governor and deputy discussed before the council. It was spoken to very ably by the counsel on either side; by Messrs. Dunning and Lee, for the province; by Mr. Wedderburn, for the governors. The latter uttered a furious philippic against poor Dr. Franklin. It required all his philosophy, natural and acquired, to support him against it. I hear that the petition will be rejected. The council was the fullest of any in our memory. Thirty-five attended.

"I hope, as you say nothing of it in your letter, that your fit of the gout was but gentle, and rather a sharp remedy than any thing that deserves to be

called a disease. With many thanks for your obliging remembrance, and all good wishes for your journey and safe return,

"I am, dear Sir,

"Your most obedient and faithful humble servant,

"EDMUND BURKE.

"Westminster, Feb. 1, 1774.

"To General Charles Lee, Philadelphia."

The parliamentary proceedings, in which he took a leading part, were in perpetuating Mr. Grenville's Election Bill, which was strongly though rather unaccountably opposed; the Budget; the Quebec Government Bill; the bills for altering the government of Massachusets; and the petitions to which they gave rise.

But the distinguishing feature of the session, and the greatest effort of oratory, as it was universally considered, which had hitherto been made in the House of Commons, or in any other popular assembly, was his speech on the 19th of April, on a motion by Mr. Fuller, who usually supported Ministry, wholly to repeal the obnoxious tea duty. He did not rise till the evening was advanced, and some members had withdrawn, who, on the report of his unusual brilliancy, hurried back to give frequent and audible testimonies of their admiration of his powers, though they would not give him their votes. The murmurs of applause in the gallery were only restrained from bursting out by awe of the House. It was on this occasion, after the delivery of a particularly powerful passage, that Lord John Townshend, who had retired thither

with some friends, exclaimed aloud—" Good God! what a man this is!—how could he acquire such transcendent powers?"

The plain, practical, common-sense policy, recommended in the following animated passage, drew from Mr. Sampson, an intelligent American much in the confidence of Dr. Franklin, a loud exclamation to a friend, who sat at a little distance from him in the gallery: " You have got a most wonderful man here; he understands more of America than all the rest of your House put together."

" Let us, Sir, embrace some system or other before we end this session. Do you mean to tax America, and to draw a productive revenue from her? If you do, speak out; name, fix, ascertain this revenue; settle its quantity; define its objects; provide for its collection; and then fight when you have something to fight for. If you murder—rob; if you kill—take possession; and do not appear in the character of madmen as well as assassins, violent, vindictive, bloody and tyrannical, without an object. But may better counsels guide you!

" Again and again, revert to your old principles—seek peace and ensue it—leave America, if she has taxable matter in her, to tax herself.* I am not

* The opinion advanced by some persons, of American representatives being sent to the British Senate, was scouted by Mr. Burke some years before this time. The writer of Junius's letters fully coincided with him; and in a private letter to Wilkes, September 7, 1771, appeals to his authority on the question, in condemning some resolutions of the Bill of Rights Society.—" If you mean that the Americans should be authorized to send their representatives to the British Parliament, I shall be contented

here going into the distinctions of rights, nor attempting to mark their boundaries. I do not enter into these metaphysical distinctions; I hate the very sound of them. Leave the Americans as they anciently stood, and these distinctions, born of our unhappy contest, will die along with it. They and we, and their and our ancestors, have been happy under that system. Let the memory of all actions in contradiction to that good old mode, on both sides, be extinguished for ever. Be content to bind America by laws of trade; you have always done it. Let this be your reason for binding their trade. Do not burthen them with taxes; you were not used to do so from the beginning. Let this be your reason for not taxing. These are the arguments of states and kingdoms. Leave the rest to the schools, for there only they may be discussed with safety. But if intemperately, unwisely, fatally, you sophisticate and poison the very source of government by urging subtle deductions, and consequences odious to those you govern, from the unlimited and illimitable nature of supreme sovereignty, you will teach them by these means to call that sovereignty itself in question. When you drive him hard, the boar will turn upon the hunters. If that sovereignty and their freedom cannot be reconciled, which will they take? They will cast your sovereignty in your face. No body of men will be argued into slavery. Sir, let the gentlemen on the other side call forth all their ability; let the best of them get up and tell me, what

with referring you to what Mr. Burke has said upon this subject, and will not venture to add any thing of my own."—*Woodfall's Edition*, vol. i. p. 293.

one character of liberty the Americans have, and what one brand of slavery they are free from, if they are bound in their property and industry by all the restraints you can imagine on commerce, and at the same time are made pack-horses of every tax you choose to impose, without the least share in granting them. When they bear the burthens of unlimited monopoly, will you bring them to bear the burthens of unlimited revenue too? The Englishman in America will feel that this is slavery;—that it is *legal* slavery, will be no compensation either to his feelings or to his understanding."

The reply to Lord Carmarthen, from its force, beauty, and readiness, excited a great emotion in the House. His Lordship observed, that Manchester not being represented, had as much right to complain as the colonies; and that as our children, the Americans, were guilty of the revolting crime of rebellion against their parent:—"True," replied the orator, "they are our children, but when children ask for bread, shall we give them a stone? When they wish to assimilate to their parent, and to reflect with a true filial resemblance the beauteous countenance of British liberty, are we to turn to them the shameful parts of our constitution? Are we to give them our weakness for their strength? Our opprobrium for their glory? And the slough of slavery, which we are not able to work off, to serve them for their freedom?"

The merits of this speech are of a great and peculiar cast; a force and truth of argument, not to be answered—ornament not more than enough—an intuitive, straight-forward wisdom, which, on all

great occasions, seems never to have deserted him—a range of observation, which nobody else dare attempt without certain ruin to the speaker and to the subject—yet skilfully brought to bear upon the point he has in view. To this end even his digressions, his illustration, his imagery, his narrative of measures, his exposition of our true policy, his appeals to experience, his graphic sketches of character, all forcibly tend. Nothing that comes in his way but is converted to use; every figure becomes an argument; and when seeming most to wander from the point, he suddenly wheels round and overpowers us with some new and formidable auxiliary to reason. It is, and indeed all his speeches are, a combination of all the constituents of eloquence, such as no other orator, foreign or native, ancient or modern, has been able to give us.

As a ready debater it added to his fame, much of it being unquestionably extemporaneous; it was also the first speech which his friends could persuade him to commit to the press, and for this purpose he had the use of their notes. On the public it made a great impression; the censure of the opposite party was confined more to the manner than to the matter; and Lord North, though he negatived the motion, appeared so confounded or convinced by the reasoning of its supporter, that early in the very next session he offered to repeal this tax, the fatal cause of so much mischief, if that would satisfy America.

About the same time his friend, poor Goldsmith, died, having scarcely finished his pleasant poem of Retaliation, written in reply to some jocular epitaphs

upon him, by the club at St. James's Coffee-house, and in which, as one of the number, the character of Mr. Burke, who, with Dr. Johnson, took the trouble to direct his funeral, is spiritedly drawn; though well known to every reader of poetry, it cannot well be omitted in a memoir of him whom it describes. Allowing for that exaggeration and sarcastic pleasantry, which the occasion called for, it would be difficult to comprise more wit and truth in the same number of lines.——

Here lies our good Edmund, whose genius was such,
We scarcely can praise it, or blame it too much;
Who, born for the universe, narrow'd his mind,
And to party gave up what was meant for mankind.
Though fraught with all learning, yet straining his throat,
To persuade Tommy Townshend to lend him a vote;
Who, too deep for his hearers, still went on refining,
And thought of convincing, while they thought of dining;
Though equal to all things, for all things unfit,
Too nice for a statesman, too proud for a wit;
For a patriot too cool, for a drudge disobedient,
And too fond of the right, to pursue the expedient;
In short, 'twas his fate, unemploy'd or in place, Sir,
To eat mutton cold, and cut blocks with a razor.

In another part, comparing the different members to dishes, he happily writes—

Our Burke shall be tongue, with the garnish of brains.

In the "Haunch of Venison" he again says—

————but struck one quite dumb,
With tidings that Johnson and Burke would not come;
"For I knew it," he cried, "both eternally fail,
The one with his speeches, and t'other with Thrale,"

amid other similar allusions.

Of the lively and affectionate interest which Mr. Burke took in the success, both in life and in art, of his protégé, Barry, abundant proofs have been already given; but he soon saw, with great pain, after the latter had been resident a short time in England, that a peculiar temper and obstinate humours would in all probability mar, if not destroy, the effect of his undoubted talents. With many great and good qualities, few persons among his own art could live with the painter long on terms of amity; he was eccentric, and self-willed; and scarcely any man who is so is agreeable to society; he had a harshness and freedom of expression in matters of opinion, which carried him further than he meant, and frequently gave offence, when perhaps offence was not intended. He had a mode of thinking and of acting of his own in all things; he had an utter contempt for money, yet became often querulous and irritable at the distresses which money alone could relieve, and felt the want of that consequence which, after all, money is one of the chief means of imparting. He had a great thirst for fame, but would not seek it on the terms which general opinion prescribed; he thought the world ought to conform to his views, and not he to the world's; he would not submit to paint portraits, and was, therefore, pretty certain of never arriving either at popularity or wealth.

A humour of his at this moment, which to some would have appeared like ingratitude, though this was by no means the case, had nearly produced a breach between him and his patron. The latter wished to have his picture painted in order to gratify an old friend; and calling frequently for this pur-

pose, was always put off with excuses of prior occupation, or the necessity of receiving previous notice, which it appeared Mr. Burke, from his incessant engagements, was wholly unable to give. The friend in question at length complaining of the delay, the following letter was written to the painter.

"SIR,

"I ought to apologize to you, for the liberty I have presumed to take, of troubling you with what I find an unseasonable visit. I humbly beg your pardon for the intrusion. My apology is this: My worthy friend Dr. Brocklesby, who has honoured me so much as to desire my picture, and wished to have it painted by you, complained to me, yesterday, that he has been two years desiring it without effect. I should be very insensible of this mark of his attention, and very undeserving of it, if I had not endeavoured, as far as in me lay, to obey his obliging commands. I have therefore several times, almost in every week since he first spoke to me (except about two months when I was wholly in the country, without coming to town at all), presented myself to you, that if you were not better engaged I might sit to you. You have always been so much employed, that you have required a day's previous notice of my intention, and for that reason declined to paint the picture at the times which suited me. It has been very unfortunate to me that my time too is so irregularly occupied, that I can never with certainty tell beforehand when I shall be disengaged. No man can be more sensible of the insignificance of my occupations, but to *me* they are of some importance, and the times of them certainly very irregular.

I came to town upon very pressing business, at four on Thursday evening; yesterday I had some hours upon my hands; I waited upon you, but I found improperly. Contrary to my expectation, a gentleman, who was to go out of town with me this morning, delays till half an hour after four o'clock; this gave me near five hours to dispose of, and which I was willing to give to my friend's wishes. I waited on you exactly at half an hour after eleven, and had the pleasure of finding you at home; but as usual, so employed as not to permit you to undertake this disagreeable business. I have troubled you with this letter, as I think it necessary to make an excuse for so frequent and importunate intrusions.

"Much as it might flatter my vanity to be painted by so eminent an artist, I assure you, that knowing I had no title to that honour, it was only in compliance with that desire (often repeated) of our common friend, that I have been so troublesome. You, who know the value of friendship, and the duties of it, I dare say, will have the goodness to excuse me on that plea. On no other should I deserve it, for intruding on you at other times than those you should please to order. Nobody, I flatter myself, regards that time more; and pays, and has always paid, a more sincere (though a very unlearned) homage to your great talents and acquirements. I must once more repeat my apology, hoping to obtain your pardon, on the usual plea of not committing the same fault again. I am, with the greatest respect and esteem, Sir, your most obedient,

"And most faithful humble servant,

"EDMUND BURKE.

"Saturday, July 9th, 1774."

Barry, in reply, professed himself much vexed at the misunderstanding, and hurt, by what he considered the sarcastic and ironical air of the letter conveying it, adding in his own defence that other artists required more notice than that for which he had asked. The rejoinder of Mr. Burke exhibits his usual force and felicity of expression.

"SIR,

"I have been honoured with a letter from you, written in a style which, from most of my acquaintances, I should have thought a little singular. In return to an apology of mine for an unseasonable intrusion, couched in language the most respectful I could employ, you tell me that I attack your quiet and endeavour to make a quarrel with you. You will judge of the propriety of this matter, and of this mode of expression.

"When I took the liberty of offering myself to sit for my picture on Saturday last, I could not possibly mean to offend you. When you declined the offer in the manner in which you declined offers of the same kind several times before, I confess I felt that such importunity on my part, and on such a subject, must make me look rather little in the eyes of others, as it certainly did in my own. The desire of being painted is one of the modes in which vanity sometimes displays itself. I am however mistaken if it be one of the fashions of that weakness in me. I thought it necessary, on being dismissed by you so often, to make you at length some apology for the frequent trouble I had given you. I assured you that my desire of sitting solely arose from my wish

to comply with the polite and friendly request of Doctor Brocklesby. I thought I should be the more readily excused on that account by you, who, as you are a man informed much more than is common, must know that some attention to the wishes of our friend, even in trifles, is an essential among the duties of friendship: I had too much value for Dr. Brocklesby's regard to neglect him even in this trivial article. Such was my apology. You find fault with it; and I should certainly ask your pardon, if I were sensible that it did or could convey any thing offensive.

"When I speak in high terms of your merit and your skill in your art, you are pleased to treat my commendation as irony. How justly the warm (though unlearned and ineffectual) testimony I have borne to that merit and that skill upon all occasions, calls for such a reflexion, I must submit to your own equity, upon a sober consideration. Those who have heard me speak upon that subject have not imagined my tone to be ironical; whatever other blame it may have merited. I have always thought and always spoke of you as a man of uncommon genius, and I am sorry that my expression of this sentiment has not had the good fortune to meet with your approbation. In future, however, I hope you will at least think more favourably of my sincerity; for if my commendation and my censure have not that quality, I am conscious they have nothing else to recommend them.

"In the latter part of your letter you refuse to paint the picture except upon certain *terms*. These terms you tell me are granted to all other painters.

They who are of importance enough to grant terms to gentlemen of your profession may enter into a discussion of their reality or their reasonableness. But I never thought my portrait a business of consequence. It was the shame of appearing to think so by my *importunity* that gave you the trouble of my apology. But that I may not seem to sin without excuse, because with knowledge, I must answer to your charging me, that 'I well know that much more is required by others,' that you think far too highly of my *knowledge* in this particular. I know no such thing by any experience of my own. I have been painted in my life five times; twice in little, and three times in large. The late Mr. Spencer and the late Mr. Sisson * painted the miniatures. Mr. Worlidge and Sir Joshua Reynolds painted the rest. I assure you, upon my honour, I never gave any of these gentlemen any regular previous notice whatsoever.

"They condescended to live with me without ceremony; and they painted me when my friends desired it, at such times as I casually went to admire their performances, and just as it mutually suited us. A picture of me is now painting for Mr. Thrale by Sir Joshua Reynolds; and in this manner, and this only. I will not presume to say that the condescension of some men forms a rule for others. I know that extraordinary civility cannot be claimed as a matter of strict justice. In that view possibly you may be right. It is not for me to dispute with you. I have ever looked up with reverence to merit of all kinds; and have learned to yield submission

* A particular friend of Mr. Burke, and one for whom he entertained a more than common regard.

even to the caprices of men of great parts. I shall certainly obey your commands; and send you a regular notice whenever I am able. I have done so at times; but having been, with great mortification to myself, obliged once or twice to disappoint you, and having been as often disappointed by your engagements, it was to prevent this that I have offered you (I may freely say) every leisure hour that I have had sure and in my own possession, for near two years past. I think a person possessed of the indulgent weakness of a friend, would have given credit to the irregularity of the calls of my little occupations, on my assuring him so frequently of the fact.

"There are expressions in your letter of so very extraordinary a nature, with regard to your being free from any misfortune, that I think it better to pass them over in silence. I do not mean to quarrel with you, Mr. Barry; I do not quarrel with my friends. You say a picture is a miserable subject for it; and you say right. But if any one should have a difference with a painter, some conduct relative to a picture is as probable a matter for it as any other. Your demanding an explanation of a letter, which was itself an explanation, has given you the trouble of this long letter. I am always ready to give an account of my conduct. I am sorry the former account I gave should have offended. If this should not be more successful, let the business end there. I could only repeat again my admiration of your talents, my wishes for your success, my sorrow for any misfortune that should befal you; and my shame, if ever so trifling a thing as a business of

mine should break in upon any order you have established in an employment to which your parts give a high degree of importance.

"I am, with the greatest truth and respect, Sir,

"Your most obedient and most humble servant,

"Beaconsfield, July 13, 1774. "EDM. BURKE."

This disagreement, arising from the caprice or whim of the painter, soon terminated; the picture was painted, and had the reputation of being an excellent likeness.

Shortly after this, Mr. Burke finding Barry busily at work, when he called, inquired the subject, and was told that it was a bagatelle—Young Mercury inventing the lyre, by accidentally finding a tortoise-shell at break of day, on the sea-shore: "Aye," replied the orator, with his accustomed promptitude, "that is the fruit of early rising,—there is the industrious boy!—But I will give you a companion for it—paint Narcissus wasting his day, in looking at himself in a fountain—that will be the idle boy." The picture was accordingly painted.—In the following year, the artist presented a copy of his Inquiry into the Real and Imaginary Obstructions to the Acquisition of the Arts in England, to the same great critic, who returned a candid and favourable opinion, in the following note, dated January 15th, 1775, from the Broad Sanctuary:—

"Mr. Burke presents his compliments to Mr. Barry, and is extremely obliged to him for the honour he has done him in his early communication of his

most ingenious performance on paintings, from several parts of which he has received no small pleasure and instruction. There are throughout the whole many fine thoughts and observations very well conceived, and very powerfully and elegantly expressed. They would however have appeared with still greater advantage, if Mr. Barry had attended to the methodical distribution of his subject, and to the rules of composition, with the same care with which he has studied and finished several of the particular members of his work.

"According to the natural order, it is evident, that what is now the 13th chapter, ought to follow immediately after the 8th; and the 9th to succeed to what is now the 19th. The subject of religion, which is resumed in the 19th chapter, ought more naturally to follow, or to make a part of the 9th, where indeed it is far better (indeed perfectly well) handled; and where, in Mr. Burke's poor opinion, as much is said upon the subject as it could reasonably bear. The matter in that last chapter is not quite so well digested, nor quite so temperately handled as in the former; and, Mr. Burke fears, will not give the satisfaction which the public will receive from the rest. There are a few parts which Mr. Burke could not have understood if he had not been previously acquainted by some gentlemen to whom Mr. Barry had explained them, that they are allusions to certain matters agitated among artists, and satires upon some of them. With regard to the justice or injustice of these strictures (of which there are several in the latter part of the book) Mr. Burke can form no opinion. As he has little or no know-

ledge of the art, he can be no judge of the emulations and disputes among its professors. These parts may therefore, for aught he knows, be very grateful and possibly useful to the several parties which subsist (if any do subsist) amongst themselves. But he apprehends they will not be equally pleasing to the world at large, which rather desires to be entertained with their works than troubled with their contentions. Whatever merit there may be in these reflections, the style of that part which most abounds with them is by no means so lively, elegant, clear, or liberal as the rest.

"Mr. Burke hopes for Mr. Barry's obliging and friendly indulgence for his apology for the liberty he has taken in laying before him what seemed to him less perfect, in a work, which in general he admires, and is persuaded the world will admire very highly. Mr. Barry knows that objections even from the meanest judges may sometimes be of use to the very best writers, and certainly such little criticisms may be of service on future occasions, if Mr. Barry should continue to oblige the world with further publications on this or any other subject (as there are few to which he is not very equal), and should turn his talents from the practice to the theory and controverted questions of this pleasing art."

Among the numerous friends who passed a short time at Gregories during the summer, were Mr. and Mrs. Thrale, and his old friend Dr. Johnson; when the latter, after wandering one day over the grounds in admiration, succeeded by a reverie, exclaimed—

Non equidem invideo, miror magis.

Which, by some, has been construed into a passing shadow of discontent, at the superiority of his friend's fortune. Johnson, however, had little of envy about him; and Burke nothing of the insolence of ordinary minds in prosperity, to excite it. For though now the leader of Opposition, the first by far in eloquence in Parliament, second to none in public talents of any kind, high in fame, in confidential connexion and friendship with the chief men of the country, distinctions which operate on the behaviour of most men, they produced in him no alteration of manner whatever. His table, society, and friendship, were as open to his less fortunate acquaintance as before. He had passed them by in the race of life, but did not neglect or despise those of worth or talents because they were nearly lost in the distance.

At the moment of parting, when the hospitable master of the mansion was setting out on election business, another supposed equivocal speech escaped from the moralist as he shook him cordially by the hand.—"Farewell, my dear Sir, and remember that I wish you all the success which ought to be wished you, which can possibly be wished you indeed—by an honest man." There is nothing ambiguous in this; now and then, it is true, he seemed to think that an honest man could scarcely wish well to a Whig, but *Mund*, as he familiarly called him, seldom came in for any share in this censure.—On the contrary, of his public exertions he said, "It was commonly observed he spoke too often in Parliament, but nobody could say he did not speak well, but perhaps too frequently and sometimes too familiarly." Such however must always be the case with

a leader of Opposition, at least as to frequent speaking. Mr. Burke, with equal regard, defended Johnson's pension this session from the attack of one of his own party, Mr. Thomas Townshend, in the House of Commons.

The Doctor launching out one day in praise of his friend Burke at Mr. Thrale's at Streatham, an Irish trader who was present, delighted at hearing his countryman so much applauded by one whom he understood to be the wisest man in England, thought he might add something to this favourite subject. "Give me leave, Sir," said he to Johnson, "to tell you something of Mr. Burke. Mr. Burke went to see the collieries in a distant province; and he would go down, Sir, into the bowels of the earth (in a bag) and he would examine every thing; he went in a bag, Sir, and ventured his life for knowledge; but he took care of his clothes, that they should not be spoiled, for he went down in a bag." "Well, Sir," replied Johnson good humouredly, in allusion to the repetitions of this fact, "if our friend Mund should die in any of these hazardous exploits, you and I would write his life and panegyric together; and your chapter of it should be entitled thus, '*Burke in a bag.*'"

These two remarkable men were perhaps the only persons of their age, who in acquirements or in original powers of mind could be compared with each other; they had been at first fellow-labourers in the literary vineyard; they had each ultimately risen to the highest eminence in different spheres; they preserved at all times sincere esteem for each other; and were rivals only in gaining the admiration of their country. From the first, Burke seems to have

possessed a strong ambition of rising in public life far above the range accessible to mere literature, or even to a profession, though that profession was the law. Johnson's views had never extended beyond simple independence and literary fame. The one desired to govern men, the other to become the monarch of their books; the one dived deeply into their political rights, the other into the matter of next importance among all nations—their authors, language, and letters. As a curious physical coincidence, it may be remarked, that both were near-sighted.

A strong cast of originality, yet with few points of resemblance, distinguish not only their thoughts, but almost their modes of thinking, and each has had the merit of founding a style of his own, which it is difficult to imitate. Johnson, seemingly born a logician, impresses truth on the mind with a scholastic, methodical, though commonly irresistible, effect. More careless of arrangement, yet with not less power, Burke assumes a more popular manner, giving to his views more ingenuity, more novelty, and, on the whole, more variety. The reasoning of the former is marshalled with the exactness of a heraldic procession, or the rank and file of an army, one in the rear of the other, according to their importance or power of producing effect. The latter, disregarding such precise discipline, makes up in the incessant and unexpected nature of his assaults, what he wants in more formal array; we can anticipate Johnson's mode of attack, but not Burke's, for, careless of the order of battle of the schools, he charges at once front, flanks, and rear; and his unwearied

perseverance in returning to the combat on every accessible point, pretty commonly ensures him the victory. The former argued like an academical teacher; the latter like what he was, and what nature had intended him for—an orator. The labours of the former were addressed to the closet; of the latter, most frequently to a popular assembly; and each chose the mode best calculated for his purpose.

Both were remarkable for subtlety and vigour of reasoning whenever the occasion required them. In copiousness and variety of language, adapted to every subject and to every capacity, Burke is generally admitted to possess the advantage; in style he has less stiffness, less mannerism, less seeming labour, and scarcely any affectation; in perspicuity they are both admirable. Johnson had on the whole more erudition; Burke inexhaustible powers of imagination. Johnson possessed a pungent, caustic wit; Burke a more playful, sarcastic humour; in the exercise of which both were occasionally coarse enough. Johnson, had his original pursuits inclined that way, would have made no ordinary politician; Burke was confessedly a master in the science; in the philosophy of it he is the first in the English language, or perhaps in any other; and in the practice of it, during the long period of his public career, was second to none. Added to these were his splendid oratorical powers, to which Johnson had no pretension. With a latent hankering after abstractions, the one in logical, the other in metaphysical subtleties, both had the good sense utterly to discard them when treating of the practical business of men.

They were distinguished for possessing a very

large share of general knowledge, accurate views of life, for social and conversational powers instructive in no common degree—and in the instance of Johnson never excelled. They understood the heart of man and his springs of action perfectly, from their constant intercourse with every class of society. Conscientious and moral in private life, both were zealous in guarding from danger the established religion of their country; and in the case of Burke, with the utmost liberality to every class of Dissenters. Johnson's censures and aversions, even on trifling occasions, were sometimes marked by rudeness and ferocity; Burke, with more amenity of manners and regard to the forms of society, rarely permitted his natural ardour of feeling to hurry him into coarseness in private life; and on public occasions only where great interests were at stake, and where delicacy was neither necessary nor deserved.

Viewed in every light, both were men of vast powers of mind, such as are rarely seen, from whom no species of learning was hidden, and to whom scarcely any natural gift had been denied; who had grasped at all knowledge with avaricious eagerness, and had proved themselves not less able to acquire than qualified to use this intellectual wealth. None were more liberal in communicating it to others, without that affectation of superiority, in Burke at least, which renders the acquisitions of pedants oppressive, and their intercourse repulsive. Whether learning, life, manners, politics, books, or men was the subject—whether wisdom was to be taught at once by precept and example, or recreation promoted by amusing and instructive conversation—they were

all to be enjoyed in the evening societies of these celebrated friends.

A dissolution of Parliament occurring in autumn, and a disagreement with Lord Verney rendering his return for Wendover unlikely, the Marquis of Rockingham offered Mr. Burke his interest in Malton, whither he proceeded and was elected.

While expressing his acknowledgments for this favour, and on the point of sitting down to dinner, a deputation from the merchants of Bristol, who had travelled rapidly to London, and from London to Yorkshire, in search of him, arrived to propose his becoming a candidate for their city, or rather to ask him to accede to his nomination, which had been already made by the leading men there. This, to one who had shown less regard to popularity than prudence demanded, was an unexpected honour. The tender, however, was too handsome to be refused; it was an offering solely to his public merits and commercial knowledge, and the favour was enhanced by the promise of being returned free of expense, an essential consideration to a man of his confined fortune.

Obtaining the ready assent of his Malton friends to this change of destination, he set off at six o'clock in the evening of Tuesday, and travelling night and day, arrived about half past two on Thursday, the 13th of October, and the sixth day of the poll, a distance then of about 350 miles. He drove instantly to the house of the Mayor, but not finding him at home, proceeded to the Guildhall, where, ascending the hustings, and saluting the electors, sheriffs, and the other candidates, he reposed for a few minutes, being utterly exhausted by fatigue and

want of sleep, and then addressed the citizens in a speech which met with great and general approbation.

After a contest protracted to the last moment, he was returned on the third of November. In a powerful address of thanks, delivered on the occasion, he exhibited what many thought too rigid a degree of independence on being pressed as to whether he meant to vote in Parliament according to his own opinion, or to the wishes of his constituents. The question at such a moment was vexatious enough, for a negative might imply on his part something like ingratitude; but being above all evasion or temporizing, he respectfully, though firmly, claimed the privilege at all times of following the dictates of his own conscience. His reasons, among the more reflecting class of politicians, have set the question for ever at rest; no one has thought it necessary to add to them, or prudent to answer them; though he complained at the moment of want of time and preparation for the discussion.

"I am sorry I cannot conclude without saying a word on a topic touched upon by my worthy colleague. I wish that topic had been passed by, at a time when I have so little leisure to discuss it. But since he has thought proper to throw it out, I owe you a clear explanation of my poor sentiments on that subject.

"He tells you that 'the topic of instructions has occasioned much altercation and uneasiness in this city;' and he expresses himself, if I understand him rightly, in favour of the coercive authority of such instructions.

" Certainly, gentlemen, it ought to be the happiness and glory of a representative, to live in the strictest union, the closest correspondence, and the most unreserved communication with his constituents. Their wishes ought to have great weight with him; their opinion high respect; their business unremitted attention. It is his duty to sacrifice his repose, his pleasures, his satisfactions to theirs; and above all, ever, and in all cases, to prefer their interest to his own. But his unbiassed opinion, his mature judgment, his enlightened conscience, he ought not to sacrifice to you, to any man, or to any set of men living. These he does not derive from your pleasure; no, nor from the law and the constitution. They are a trust from Providence, for the abuse of which he is deeply answerable. Your representative owes you not his industry only, but his judgment; and he betrays instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion.

" My worthy colleague says, his will ought to be subservient to yours. If that be all, the thing is innocent. If government were a matter of will upon any side, yours without question ought to be superior. But government and legislation are matters of reason and judgment, and not of inclination; and what sort of reason is that in which the determination precedes the discussion; in which one set of men deliberate and another decide; and where those who form the conclusion are perhaps three hundred miles distant from those who hear the arguments?

" To deliver an opinion is the right of all men; that of constituents is a weighty and respectable opinion, which a representative ought always to

rejoice to hear; and which he ought always most seriously to consider. But *authoritative* instructions; *mandates* issued which the member is bound blindly and implicitly to obey, to vote, and to argue for, though contrary to the clearest conviction of his judgment and conscience; these are things utterly unknown to the laws of this land, and which arise from a fundamental mistake of the whole order and tenour of our constitution.

"Parliament is not a *congress* of ambassadors from different states and with hostile interests; which interests each must maintain as an agent and advocate against other agents and advocates; but Parliament is a *deliberative* assembly of *one* nation with *one* interest, that of the whole; where not local purposes, not local prejudices, ought to guide, but the general good, resulting from the general reason of the whole. You choose a member indeed; but when you have chosen him, he is not member of Bristol, but he is a member of Parliament. If the local constituent should have an interest, or should form an hasty opinion, evidently opposite to the real good of the rest of the community, the member for that place ought to be as far as any other from any endeavour to give it effect."

On another occasion (1780), he told them—"I did not obey your instructions: No. I conformed to the instructions of truth and nature, and maintained your interest, against your opinions, with a constancy that became me. A representative worthy of you ought to be a person of stability. I am to look indeed to your opinions; but to such opinions as you and I *must* look to five years hence. I was

not to look at the flash of the day. I knew that you chose me, in my place, along with others, to be a pillar of the state, and not a weather-cock on the top of the edifice, exalted for my levity and versatility, and of no use but to indicate the shiftings of every popular gale."

These speeches being circulated through the country, an unusual thing with election speeches of that day, met with general applause.

A ludicrous anecdote is recorded of his brother candidate, Mr. Cruger, a merchant chiefly concerned in the American trade, who, at the conclusion of one of Mr. Burke's eloquent harangues, finding nothing to add, or perhaps as he thought to add with effect, exclaimed earnestly in the language of the counting-house, "I say ditto to Mr. Burke—I say ditto to Mr. Burke." With such an example before him, however, he must have improved materially in the art of delivering his sentiments in public, for in the succeeding session he spoke on American business several times with sufficient spirit.

CHAPTER VI.

Parliamentary Business.—Speech on American Conciliation.—Anecdotes of Drs. Franklin, Priestley, and Mr. Hartley.—Round Robin on Goldsmith's Epitaph.—Epitaph on Mr. Dowdeswell.—Use of a good Speech in Parliament.—Letters to the Sheriffs and two Gentlemen of Bristol.—To Lord Charlemont, Barry, Mr. Francis, Mr. Fox, Dr. Robertson.—Speeches on the Address and Employment of the Indians.—Statue proposed in Dublin.—Admiral Keppel.—Letter to Sir William Jones.

It was the common lot of Mr. Burke, during much of his political life, to see fulfilled in the recess the predictions he had made during the preceding session. So was it with the scheme for shutting up the port of Boston, which more than realized his worst anticipations, by giving birth to that concentration of the most turbulent spirits of the colonies into a congress, where almost at their first meeting, and wholly unknown to their constituents, was laid the plan of total separation from the mother-country.

A variety of petitions from the merchants and manufacturers, deprecating hostilities, flowed into the House of Commons, which were strenuously though ineffectually seconded by the Member for Bristol; being referred, not to a political committee, as he wished, but to a commercial one, which was wittily called by him, and afterwards generally known, as the Committee of Oblivion, from nothing having transpired from it.

The reports which exist of four or five of the speeches on these petitions, though extremely scanty,

give some idea of the vehemence with which he opposed the hostile spirit toward America, and the variety of matter he brought to bear upon the question.

In concluding an animated harangue (26th Jan.) he used a beautiful illustration, which drew great applause, of an archer about to direct an arrow to the heart of his enemy, but found that in his adversary's arms was enfolded his own child. This incident he recommended with cautionary admonition to those statesmen who had in contemplation the destruction of America, unmindful that they could not accomplish so baneful a purpose, without at the same time plunging a dagger into the vitals of Great Britain. "Let your commerce," said he, "come before you—see whether it be not your child that America has in its arms—see of what value that child is—examine and consider whether you ought to shoot—and if you must shoot, shoot so as to avoid wounding what is dearest to you in the world. —Without examining your trade you cannot do this."

For his exertions on these occasions the following letter of thanks was forwarded to him, signed by fifteen of the principal merchants of Birmingham—

"To Edmund Burke, Esq.

"Sir, "Birmingham, Feb. 8, 1775.

"The merchants and manufacturers who have had a principal share of the American trade from this town and neighbourhood, beg your acceptance, through our hands, of their warmest acknowledg-

ments for your liberal support of our petition to the honourable House of Commons, wherein are stated the evils we already feel, and the greater we have yet to apprehend from a continued stagnation of so important a branch of our commerce as that with North America.

"At the same time we also unite in expressing our particular thanks for the motion you were pleased to make for an inquiry into the manner of both the late petitions from the town of Birmingham having been obtained, an inquiry which could scarcely have failed to give some useful intelligence, and to have fully justified our application to Parliament at so critical a juncture.

"We cannot wonder, Sir, that defamation should have made its appearance on such an occasion as this, which is the notorious evidence of a weak cause, and whose mischiefs we are persuaded will be as transient as its efforts have been intemperate.

"We only take the liberty, therefore, of adding our sincere wishes, that you may long fill your distinguished place in the British Senate, and that your persevering endeavours to preserve the rights of the subject, to maintain the prosperity of our commerce, and to secure the tranquillity of this extensive empire, may meet with a success adequate to the patriotic zeal with which they are animated. Being with the greatest regard,

"Sir, yours, &c."

Two more important, though indirect, tributes to his public wisdom appeared soon afterwards in the proceedings of the House of Lords: one in the

declaratory act of 1766, said to be chiefly his, and censured then by Lord Chatham, was now adopted by his Lordship as the groundwork of a plan which he brought forward in the Lords to conciliate America. The other respected the taxation of that country which Mr. Burke had so long ineffectually reprobated, when, on an incidental allusion to that measure, Lords North, Mansfield, Camden, the Duke of Grafton, and others, all of whom were advisers of the Crown at the time it was adopted, now, to the surprise of the nation, utterly and angrily disclaimed having taken any part in advising it. The subsequent evidence of Mr. Penn, at the bar of the House of Lords, also seemed to imply, that America would have been quiet had things remained on the footing left by the Rockingham Administration.

Undeterred by the failure just alluded to of Lord Chatham's scheme in the House of Lords for quieting the troubles in America, Mr. Burke, on the 22d of March, 1775, introduced his celebrated thirteen propositions to accomplish the same object, urged to the attempt, it appears, by the persuasions of Mr. Rose Fuller, whose motion for the abolition of the tea duty he had supported the preceding year. His reluctance to come forward on this occasion, and the aim of the measure itself, are stated with much modesty yet force.

"I felt the truth of what my honourable friend represented; but I felt my situation too. His application might have been made with far greater propriety to many other gentlemen. No man was indeed ever better disposed, or worse qualified, for such an undertaking than myself.

"Though I gave so far into his opinion, that I immediately threw my thoughts into a sort of parliamentary form, I was by no means equally ready to produce them. It generally argues some degree of natural impotence of mind, or some want of knowledge of the world, to hazard plans of government, except from a seat of authority. Propositions are made, not only ineffectually, but somewhat disreputably, when the minds of men are not properly disposed for their reception; and for my part, I am not ambitious of ridicule; not absolutely a candidate for disgrace.

"Besides, Sir, to speak the plain truth, I have in general no very exalted opinion of the virtue of paper government; nor of any politics, in which the plan is to be wholly separated from the execution. But when I saw, that anger and violence prevailed every day more and more; and that things were hastening towards an incurable alienation of our colonies; I confess my caution gave way. I felt this, as one of those few moments in which decorum yields to a higher duty. Public calamity is a mighty leveller; and there are occasions when any, even the slightest, chance of doing good, must be laid hold on, even by the most inconsiderable person.

"To restore order and repose to an empire so great and so distracted as ours, is, merely in the attempt, an undertaking that would ennoble the flights of the highest genius, and obtain pardon for the efforts of the meanest understanding. Struggling a good while with these thoughts, by degrees I felt myself more firm. I derived, at length, some confidence from what in other circumstances usually

produces timidity. I grew less anxious, even from the idea of my own insignificance. For, judging of what you are, by what you ought to be, I persuade myself, that you would not reject a reasonable proposition, because it had nothing but its reason to recommend it.

"On the other hand, being totally destitute of all shadow of influence, natural or adventitious, I was very sure, that, if my proposition were futile or dangerous; if it were weakly conceived, or improperly timed, there was nothing exterior to it, of power to awe, dazzle, or delude you. You will see it just as it is; and you will treat it just as it deserves.

"The proposition is peace. Not peace through the medium of war; not peace to be hunted through the labyrinth of intricate and endless negociations; not peace to arise out of universal discord, fomented from principle, in all parts of the empire; not peace to depend on the juridical determination of perplexing questions; or the precise marking the shadowy boundaries of a complex government. It is simple peace; sought in its natural course, and in its ordinary haunts. It is peace sought in the spirit of peace; and laid in principles purely pacific. I propose, by removing the ground of the difference, and by restoring the *former unsuspecting confidence of the colonies in the mother country*, to give permanent satisfaction to your people; and (far from a scheme of ruling by discord) to reconcile them to each other in the same act, and by the bond of the very same interest, which reconciles them to British government.

"My idea is nothing more. Refined policy ever has been the parent of confusion; and ever will be so, as long as the world endures. Plain good intention, which is as easily discovered at the first view, as fraud is surely detected at last, is, let me say, of no mean force in the government of mankind. Genuine simplicity of heart is an healing and cementing principle. My plan, therefore, being formed upon the most simple grounds imaginable, may disappoint some people, when they hear it. It has nothing to recommend it to the pruriency of curious ears. There is nothing at all new and captivating in it. It has nothing of the splendour of the project, which has been lately laid upon your table by the noble lord in the blue riband. It does not propose to fill your lobby with squabbling colony agents, who will require the interposition of your mace, at every instant, to keep the peace amongst them. It does not institute a magnificent auction of finance, where captivated provinces come to general ransom by bidding against each other, until you knock down the hammer, and determine a proportion of payments beyond all the powers of algebra to equalise and settle."

Of the moral and physical character of America he had gained so perfect an acquaintance, that the sketch he then drew both of the country and people, though fifty years have elapsed, is as fresh and accurate as any of the present day, and is, in fact, sometimes quoted by those who write upon the United States. It had been, as we have seen, an early subject for his pen; his opinions had been formed respecting it, he expressly tells us, before he

entered Parliament; it had been a constant subject of deliberation while he was there; and its importance induced him, favoured by his connexion with the country as colonial agent, to consult every source of information, written and oral, in order to become master of the points in dispute, and guided by circumstances, to point out the wisest policy for England to pursue. The case was different with the Ministry, or rather the succession of Ministries, of the day, who, flitting into and out of the Cabinet like the transient and shadowy figures of a magic lantern, had little time for maturing a plan, and scarcely for continuity of thought on the subject.

"But there is still," said he, speaking of the people, "a third consideration concerning this object, which serves to determine my opinion on the sort of policy which ought to be pursued in the management of America even more than its population and its commerce; I mean its temper and character.

"In this character of the Americans, a love of freedom is the predominating feature which marks and distinguishes the whole: and as an ardent is always a jealous affection, your colonies become suspicious, restive, and untractable, whenever they see the least attempt to arrest from them by force, or shuffle from them by chicane, what they think the only advantage worth living for. This fierce spirit of liberty is stronger in the English colonies, probably, than in any other people of the earth; and this from a great variety of powerful causes; which, to understand the true temper of their minds, and

the direction which this spirit takes, it will not be amiss to lay open somewhat more largely.

" First, the people of the colonies are descendants of Englishmen. England, Sir, is a nation, which still I hope respects, and formerly adored, her freedom. The colonists emigrated from you, when this part of your character was most predominant; and they took this bias and direction the moment they parted from your hands. They are therefore not only devoted to liberty, but to liberty according to English ideas, and on English principles. Abstract liberty, like other mere abstractions, is not to be found. Liberty inheres in some sensible object, and every nation has formed to itself some favourite point, which by way of eminence becomes the criterion of their happiness.

" It happened, you know, Sir, that the great contests for freedom in this country were from the earliest times chiefly upon the question of taxing. Most of the contests in the ancient commonwealths turned primarily on the right of election of magistrates; or on the balance among the several orders of the state. The question of money was not with them so immediate. But in England it was otherwise. On this point of taxes the ablest pens, and most eloquent tongues, have been exercised; the greatest spirits have acted and suffered.

" In order to give the fullest satisfaction concerning the importance of this point, it was not only necessary for those who in argument defended the excellence of the English constitution, to insist on this privilege of granting money as a dry point

of fact, and to prove, that the right had been acknowledged in ancient parchments, and blind usages, to reside in a certain body called a House of Commons. They went much farther; they attempted to prove, and they succeeded, that in theory it ought to be so, from the particular nature of a House of Commons, as an immediate representative of the people; whether the old records had delivered this oracle or not. They took infinite pains to inculcate, as a fundamental principle, that in all monarchies the people must in effect themselves, mediately or immediately, possess the power of granting their own money, or no shadow of liberty could subsist.

"The colonies draw from you, as with their life blood, these ideas and principles. Their love of liberty, as with you, fixed and attached in this specific point of taxing. Liberty might be safe, or might be endangered in twenty other particulars, without their being much pleased or alarmed. Here they felt its pulse; and as they found that beat, they thought themselves sick or sound. I do not say whether they were right or wrong in applying your general arguments to their own case. It is not easy indeed to make a monopoly of theorems and corollaries. The fact is, that they did thus apply those general arguments; and your mode of governing them, whether through lenity or indolence, through wisdom or mistake, confirmed them in the imagination, that they, as well as you, had an interest in these common principles.

"They were further confirmed in this pleasing error, by the form of their provincial legislative assemblies. Their governments are popular in a

high degree; some are merely popular; in all, the popular representative is the most weighty; and this share of the people in their ordinary government never fails to inspire them with lofty sentiments, and with a strong aversion from whatever tends to deprive them of their chief importance.

"If any thing were wanting to this necessary operation of the form of government, religion would have given it a complete effect. Religion, always a principle of energy, in this new people, is no way worn out or impaired; and their mode of professing it is also one main cause of this free spirit. The people are protestants; and of that kind, which is the most adverse to all implicit submission of mind and opinion.

"This is a persuasion not only favourable to liberty, but built upon it. I do not think, Sir, that the reason of this averseness in the dissenting churches, from all that looks like absolute government, is so much to be sought in their religious tenets, as in their history. Every one knows that the Roman Catholic religion is at least coeval with most of the governments where it prevails; that it has generally gone hand in hand with them; and received great favour and every kind of support from authority. The church of England too was formed from her cradle under the nursing care of regular government.

"But the dissenting interests have sprung up in direct opposition to all the ordinary powers of the world; and could justify that opposition only on a strong claim to natural liberty. Their very existence depended on the powerful and unremitted

assertion of that claim. All protestantism, even the most cold and passive, is a sort of dissent. But the religion most prevalent in our northern colonies is a refinement on the principle of resistance; it is the dissidence of dissent; and the protestantism of the protestant religion.

"This religion, under a variety of denominations, agreeing in nothing but in the communion of the spirit of liberty, is predominant in most of the northern provinces; where the church of England, notwithstanding its legal rights, is in reality no more than a sort of private sect, not composing, most probably, the tenth of the people. The colonists left England when this spirit was high; and in the emigrants was the highest of all; and even that stream of foreigners, which has been constantly flowing into these colonies, has, for the greatest part, been composed of dissenters from the establishments of their several countries, and have brought with them a temper and character far from alien to that of the people with whom they mixed."

The details relating to the condition of the country, its agriculture, and commerce, are too long for quotation; but the delivery of the following exquisite passage drew a burst of enthusiastic applause, and has often been adverted to for its beauty.

"Mr. Speaker, I cannot prevail on myself to hurry over this great consideration. It is good for us to be here. We stand where we have an immense view of what is, and what is past. Clouds indeed, and darkness, rest upon the future. Let us, however, before we descend from this noble eminence, reflect that this growth of our national prosperity

has happened within the short period of the life of man. It has happened within sixty-eight years. There are those alive whose memory might touch the two extremities. For instance, my Lord Bathurst might remember all the stages of the progress. He was in 1704 of an age at least to be made to comprehend such things. He was then old enough *acta parentum jam legere, et quæ sit poterit cognoscere virtus.*

" Suppose, Sir, that the angel of this auspicious youth, foreseeing the many virtues which made him one of the most fortunate men of his age, had opened to him in vision, that, when, in the fourth generation, the third Prince of the House of Brunswick had sat twelve years on the throne of that nation, which (by the happy issue of moderate and healing councils) was to be made Great Britain, he should see his son, Lord Chancellor of England, turn back the current of hereditary dignity to its fountain, and raise him to an higher rank of peerage, whilst he enriched the family with a new one. If, amidst these bright and happy scenes of domestic honour and prosperity, that angel should have drawn up the curtain, and unfolded the rising glories of his country, and whilst he was gazing with admiration on the then commercial grandeur of England, the genius should point out to him a little speck, scarce visible in the mass of the national interest, a small seminal principle, rather than a formed body, and should tell him—' Young man, there is America—which at this day serves for little more than to amuse you with stories of savage men, and uncouth manners ; yet shall, before you taste of

death, show itself equal to the whole of that commerce which now attracts the envy of the world. Whatever England has been growing to by a progressive increase of improvement, brought in by varieties of people, by succession of civilising conquests and civilising settlements in a series of seventeen hundred years, you shall see as much added to her by America in the course of a single life!' If this state of his country had been foretold to him, would it not require all the sanguine credulity of youth, and all the fervid glow of enthusiasm, to make him believe it? Fortunate man, he has lived to see it! Fortunate indeed, if he lives to see nothing that shall vary the prospect, and cloud the setting of his day!"

His views on the general question at this time may be stated in a few words, as by some who even profess to write history, they are sometimes misrepresented or misunderstood.

America was imperceptibly become a great country without aiming at, or scarcely seeming to know it; formed for strength as some men are born to honours, by a decree beyond their own control; that it was unwise to irritate her to exertion of this strength when her natural inclination was for peace and trade; that she might be influenced by mildness and persuasion, but would probably resist command.

He contended for the general supremacy of Parliament and the imperial rights of the Crown as undoubted, though these should be exercised with great reserve over, not a colony, but a nation, situated at a great distance, and difficult, if at all possible, to coerce: that in compliance with the unanimous

feeling of the people of that nation, all the internal details, especially that of taxation, should remain as hitherto, with their provincial assemblies: that a parliamentary revenue, such as now aimed at, was next to impossible: that England had never enjoyed, and never would enjoy, a direct productive revenue from any colony, but at all events to trust for it rather to voluntary grants, as in Ireland, than to authoritative requisitions: that all harsh acts be repealed: that the colonies be placed on the same footing toward the mother-country as in 1766: that a feeling of friendly concession alone could govern a people free in spirit and in fact, spread over a vast extent of country, and increasing at an unusual rate in numbers: that peace should be sought in the spirit of peace, not in severe parliamentary enactments; and quoted as examples of the success of lenient measures, the instances of Ireland, Wales, Chester, and Durham: that the right of taxation being relinquished, all moderate men would be conciliated; but if more than all these should be required, then it would be time for us to turn round with a decided negative.

The question as to the *right* of taxing, on which the advocates for coercion so much, though vainly, insisted, he again, as in the speech of the preceding year, treats ironically, or wholly discards from the argument.

"Sir, I think you must perceive that I am resolved this day to have nothing at all to do with the question of the right of taxation. Some gentlemen startle—but it is true; I put it totally out of the question. It is less than nothing in my

consideration. I do not indeed wonder, nor will you, Sir, that gentlemen of profound learning are fond of displaying it on this profound subject. But my consideration is narrow, confined, and wholly limited to the policy of the question.

"I do not examine whether the giving away a man's money be a power excepted and reserved out of the general trust of government; and how far all mankind, in all forms of polity, are entitled to an exercise of that right by the charter of nature. Or whether, on the contrary, a right of taxation is necessarily involved in the general principle of legislation, and inseparable from the ordinary supreme power. These are deep questions, where great names militate against each other; where reason is perplexed; and an appeal to authorities only thickens the confusion. For high and reverend authorities lift up their heads on both sides; and there is no sure footing in the middle. This point is the *great serbonian bog, betwixt Damiata and Mount Casius old, where armies whole have sunk.* I do not intend to be overwhelmed in that bog, though in such respectable company.

"The question with me is, not whether you have a right to render your people miserable; but whether it is not your interest to make them happy. It is not what a lawyer tells me I *may* do; but what humanity, reason, and justice tell me I ought to do. Is a politic act the worse for being a generous one? Is no concession proper, but that which is made from your want of right to keep what you grant? Or does it lessen the grace or dignity of relaxing in the exercise of an odious

claim, because you have your evidence room full of titles, and your magazines stuffed with arms to enforce them? What signify all those titles and all those arms? Of what avail are they when the reason of the thing tells, that the assertion of my title is the loss of my suit; and that I could do nothing but wound myself by the use of my own weapons?"

This speech by which the propositions were recommended excited general admiration, and in power did not fall short of that of the preceding year. Lord Chatham, when asked his opinion of this speech at the time, replied, "it is very seasonable, very reasonable, and very eloquent." Mr. Fox, nearly twenty years afterwards, applying its views to Parliamentary Reform, said, "Let gentlemen read this speech by day, and meditate upon it by night; let them peruse it again and again, study it, imprint it on their minds, impress it on their hearts—they would there learn that representation was the sovereign remedy for every evil."

Lord Erskine also, in a recent speech at Edinburgh, touching on the same theme, observed, "It could only proceed from this cause (the alleged corruption of Parliament), that the immortal orations of Burke against the American war did not produce as general conviction as they did unmingled admiration." This is certainly not correct; at least Mr. Burke himself, out of the heat of debate, assigned no such reason; he candidly confessed, that the country gentlemen wanted a partner in bearing the burden of taxation; the King wished to see obedient subjects rather than allies; the body of the nation,

which was as jealous of undisputed sovereignty as either, fully seconded their views; and the wisdom of the House of Commons alone, unsupported by the people, put an end to the contest.*

* The following, written on a sheet of foolscap, are believed to be either the original notes from which the speech was spoken, or drawn up by himself immediately afterwards, for the information of a friend, to be published on the spur of the moment, at Bristol; the hand is larger than his usual writing, but it bears evident traces of having been written in a great hurry, sometimes using the first, sometimes the third person.

ANALYSIS OF MR. BURKE'S SPEECH

ON OFFERING HIS RESOLUTIONS.

" Proëm.

" Apologizing for taking up this measure, stating his own description and situation with great humility, but when he stated in general that (what?) he should propose was not his, but the reasonings and opinions of the Legislature already expressed by our ancestors in old times, were such and such as time had matured and experience confirmed, he had no apology to make, except for any disadvantage these sentiments might receive from the manner of delivering them, &c. &c. &c.

" He then mentioned the unhappy state of our quarrels with our colonies, which could end only in the destruction of our constitution, and the ruin of the British Empire. That peace only could ensure the one, and restore the stability of the other; not an insidious delusive peace that has slavery in its train, but peace founded on the establishment of the rights of mankind, and on civil liberty, as they are the basis of our empire.

" Not peace by war—

" nor by negotiation.

" Not a peace to be bought by taxes, and bid for at an auction:

" But by conciliation, and concession of the superior—conciliation having gone forth and entered into the heart of every Briton. The Minister has assumed the form of that angel of light, and breathes the spirit of conciliation.—Would to God it was the real spirit of it in good truth.—He hath been driven to the necessity of making concession, but hath been forced, by some

Toward the close of the session, after three months' almost daily discussion of American affairs, he pre-

secret force or fatality, to load and clog his measures with principles and conditions, such as must render it impossible for the Americans to accept it, and which must therefore in the end prove a plan to render them still more obnoxious to Parliament and Government here.

"Leaving behind me and erasing from my mind every idea of Ministers and such persons, I will look only to the spirit and doctrines of your laws, and will seek no peace but where they teach us to look for it, and to follow it.

"Let us not seek peace by force, but by conciliation.

"If *conciliation* be used ineffectually there will still (be) room enough left for *force;* but if *force* be first tried, and that shall prove to be used ineffectually, there will be no room for *conciliation.*

"The magnitude of the object should teach (us) to look to conciliation—and to know that force will not do.

"View—1. The wealth of the colonies.
2. The number of the people.
3. The principles which animate their spirit.
Principles of liberty.
Principles of religion.

"View their character and temper—

Their learning and their habits, } as derived from the nature of their popular government—

"Their turn for politics, and their knowledge of such, as taught from their first entrance into life.

"Consider next their vast distance—

"Consider how even despotic governments are obliged to use management and address in the government of their distant provinces.

"If the acts of the opposition in the colonies cannot be prosecuted criminally—

"There is no way to settle it by compromise.

"On this subject of compromise I say nothing as to sovereignty.

"I omit the question as to the right of taxation, and will only

sented a remonstrance from New York, hitherto a quiet and loyal colony, upon the harshness shown to her sister states, which met with the same reception from the Minister, as the other innumerable petitions and agents did from Lords, Commons, and Privy Council; that is, few of them were received, and none deigned to be answered.

speak to practice and fact as found in the precedents of your own conduct.

" The practice of Parliament
as to Ireland,
Wales,
Chester,
Durham—

" Following these precedents, I would propose an American Representation—but the sea and distance are in my way.—As I cannot give the best, I will offer the next best—and that is—that which is already established—

" Their own Assemblies—

" They are competent to all the purposes of taxation.

" To lay the ground for that solid basis whereon I would again re-establish peace, and replace the empire and its government.—

" Offers six resolutions of facts.

" Corollaries.

1. That it may be proper to repeal the Tea Act.
2. The Boston Port Bill.
3. The Massachusets Government Bill.
4. The Military Bill."

The original of this outline draught of so powerful a speech, in a soiled and tattered condition, communicated and purchased as a genuine document, is in possession of Sir P. Phillips.

In the mean time, the first blood was drawn in the colonies at Lexington and Concord, followed by the fight of Bunker's Hill, the raising of regular armies, the appointment of General Washington as Commander-in-chief, and other consequent measures, which left the chance of accommodation by any means a matter of doubt.

The rejection of all petitions, no doubt, tended much to the alienation of the public feeling in America; increased, perhaps, by the severity shown to so popular a man as Dr. Franklin, before the Privy Council, the preceding year, on the Massachusets petition against the governor and deputy-governor of the province; to which, as we have seen, Mr. Burke alluded in the letter to General Lee, without venturing to comment on it with his usual prophetic ingenuity and force.

On that occasion, Dr. Priestley, with whom he was acquainted, relates an anecdote to the following effect:—"Going along Parliament-street, on the morning of the 29th of January, 1774, I met Mr. Burke and Dr. Douglas, Bishop of Salisbury, when the former introduced us to each other, as men of letters, and inquired whither I was going. I replied, I could say whither I *wished* to go; and on explaining that it was to the Privy Council, he desired me to accompany him. The ante-room proved to be so full of persons, on the same errand as ourselves, that I despaired even of getting near the door. 'Keep fast hold of me,' said Mr. Burke, locking my arm within his, and forcing his way, after much difficulty, to the door. 'You are an excellent leader, Mr. Burke.' 'I wish others thought so too,' replied

he. We got in among the first, Mr. Burke taking his stand behind the chair next to the President, and I next to him."

Dr. Franklin, whom he had known for about 15 years, gave him, at this time, for so wary a politician, an unusual proof of esteem and confidence, by calling upon him in April of this year (1775), the day previous to his finally quitting London, and opening his mind without seeming reserve. The Doctor said he looked to the approaching contest with the most painful feelings; for nothing could give him more sorrow than that separation between the mother-country and colonies, which now seemed inevitable, from the obstinate and unaccommodating temper of England; adding that America had enjoyed many happy days under her rule, previous to this unhappy dispute, and might possibly never see such again.

Among ourselves, dissensions on account of this agitating topic ran high; the old distinctions of Whig and Tory were revived with all their original acrimony, and Mr. Burke, as the oracle of the former, came in for a large share of censure, particularly from Dean Tucker, who represented him as the most artful reasoner living, one who could amuse with tropes, and figures, and fine words, without allowing his design to be seen, till he had entrapped the hearer or reader irrecoverably in the meshes of his argument; other political writers joined in the cry, who, admitting his extraordinary powers, affected to consider them degraded by his becoming so determined a party man.

Some, even of his friends inconsiderately appeared to join in the latter opinion, as if it were possible for any leading English statesman to be otherwise than

what is termed a party man. He who expects to lead in political life must of necessity, on first entering into it, either form a party of his own, or attach himself to one of the two great divisions in the state; and though the choice of such associates necessarily rests with himself, it is oftener determined, especially among young men of rank, by the politics of his friends, or family connexions. Should he profess perfect independence on all points, he will find little, or very hollow, support in an assembly, where, above all others, some certain support is necessary; without it, indeed, he cannot even calculate on the humble merit of being merely useful, and certainly cannot become great.

With a party, on the contrary, he rises into consequence; he has the advantage of profiting by older heads, and equal, if not superior, minds to his own; and to use the language of Burke, on another occasion, "he who profits by an equal understanding, doubles the power of his own." No man jumps into Parliament an able statesman, no more than he can start at the bar, with his first brief, an accomplished lawyer, or enter the field, with his ensign's commission, a finished soldier. He must first learn to submit and to serve, and in time may hope to command. It is useless, therefore, to complain of a politician being a party man; we may as well complain that the independence of the limbs is sacrificed by being affixed to the body, without remembering that it is union alone which makes either useful.

Mr. Burke visited France again in the summer, returning not more favourably impressed than before, with the character of her literati and philosophers. His father-in-law, Dr. Nugent, died in

Suffolk-street, in November, a worthy and intelligent man, whom Dr. Johnson not only loved, but used to profess himself proud of the honour of standing high in his esteem; he was the author of a new theory of Hydrophobia, and is often mistaken for another Dr. Nugent, a travelling tutor, who published his travels, a translation of Benvenuto Cellini, and other works. In December, he lost another friend and warm admirer in Admiral Sir Charles Saunders, pronouncing, on the same evening, an animated apostrophe to his memory in the House of Commons.

The coercive spirit manifested in the Address at the opening of the session, brought him forward in a forcible appeal to the House to pause in measures of force; supplicating Ministry to assume some other tone than that of violence; not to let England come to the discussion, like the irritated porcupine with its quills, armed all over with angry acts of Parliament.

Several petitions from the clothiers of Wiltshire gave him the opportunity of proposing, on the 16th of November, 1775, a new conciliatory scheme, grounded on the model of the statute of Edward I. *de tallagio non concedendo.*

Three plans, he said, were afloat for quieting America; first, simple war, in order to a perfect conquest; secondly, a mixture of war and treaty; thirdly, the best, and in his opinion only practicable mode, peace founded on concession. Among other things he suggested the renunciation of taxation, the repeal of all obnoxious laws since 1766, a general amnesty, and recognition of the Congress, in order

to a final adjustment of grievances; a change in all these points, he would not conceal, necessarily involved a change in the Ministers who had brought the country into the dilemma.

Of this speech, which occupied three hours and 20 minutes in the delivery, and was said by many who heard it to possess singular vigour and originality, embracing a vast compass of matter, British and American, only a poor abstract remains; it brought forward all the talents of the House, in a spirit of emulative excellence, to the discussion; and the division was the strongest Opposition had been yet enabled to muster on the American question, the numbers against the previous question being 105 to 210. In the peroration he said he was confident, both from the nature of the thing, and from information which did not use to fail him, that this bill would restore immediate peace; and as much obedience as could be expected after so rude a shock given to the authority of government, and after so long a continuance of public disturbances.

Four days afterwards, the bill to prohibit all intercourse with America, known by the name of the Starvation Plan, received his unqualified reprobation. Petitions from the West-India and Nova-Scotia merchants, stating their utter ruin to be the consequence of it, were so cavalierly treated, that he moved an ironical resolution, in substance that the House, knowing all things relative to America, required no further information. On some large votes for the army extraordinaries, he remarked, that fasting might as well be recommended to a body of aldermen at a City-feast, as economy to a

committee of supply. Mr. Wilkes's motion for Reform he opposed; a humane measure of his own, for saving from depredation seamen and vessels wrecked, failed; as did another conciliatory scheme for America which he supported, proposed by Mr. David Hartley.

This gentleman, a representative for Hull, a very honest man, a sound Whig, an indefatigable politician, was a long-winded and heavy orator; so dull indeed, that the period of his rising often became a signal to desert the benches. Having some time after this thinned a full House down to a few dozens, he unexpectedly called for the Riot Act to be read, to support or to explain something in the march of his argument. Mr. Burke, who sat near him, and had anxiously waited to speak to the question, could contain himself no longer, but jumping up, gave vent to his impatience by an irresistibly comic remonstrance, that drew peals of laughter from all present, and which Lord North afterwards used to repeat, as one of the happiest instances of wit he ever heard.—"The Riot Act! my dear friend, the Riot Act! to what purpose? don't you see that the mob is completely dispersed?"

That conciliatory measures were not altogether hopeless, notwithstanding the unceasing acts of Congress to inflame the mind of that country, may be inferred from the difficulty with which the declaration of independence, in July of this year, was carried in that assembly itself—one of the most curious facts perhaps in modern history. Six states voted for, six against that measure; and the delegates of Pennsylvania were equally divided in opinion, when

at length a member, who had hitherto strenuously opposed it, suddenly changed sides and decided the question. This hesitation among a body to avow in form what they were in fact—which had raised armies, fought battles, levied imposts, and resisted the mother-country by vote, injunction, proclamation, and every other possible mode, is a proof that the passions of moderate men, excited for a moment by the arts of the more designing, shrunk from the ultimate consequences of their own violence. It is an equal proof that the conduct of the English Ministry was utterly deficient in wisdom, moderation, and address; for otherwise, scales so nicely poised must have turned in favour of their country.

Some letters in the newspapers this summer, under the signature of Valens, have been attributed to Mr. Burke, though they were really written by William Burke,* who, though he spoke occasionally between 1768 and 1774, found himself much better qualified to wield his pen than his tongue.

Edmund seemed rather to seek relief from all political wrangling, except what the House of Commons required, in the literary society of which he was always so fond. Mr. Arthur Young, going on his well-known tour through Ireland, received from him the following letter of introduction to Lord Charlemont, remarkable for its elegance of expression, and for some of the sentiments on matters connected with the war.

* This gentleman wrote much, but seldom acknowledged his offspring; many pieces of merit, in prose and verse, were, how-

" Westminster, June 4th, 1776.

" My dear Lord,

" Permit me to make Mr. Young acquainted with you. To his works and his reputation you can be no stranger. I may add, that in conversing with this gentleman, you will find that he is very far from having exhausted his stock of useful and pleasing ideas in the numerous publications with which he

ever, handed about among his friends. The following is an impromptu:—

Inscription for the Rook-house at Taplow; written on the spot.

To the genius of this cell
Tunes the Muse his rustic shell;
Here the Muses best are woo'd,
Here no worldly cares intrude;
What so cheerful room to dine in,
Or so cool to drink our wine in?
Here the grape has double zest;
Doubly relish'd is the jest;
Form and state are here abhorr'd;
Here my lord's no more a lord;
Or alike we all are peers,
When the fragrant Bordeaux cheers.
Down from off this airy cliff
Oft are seen in painted skiff
Nymphs and swains to skim along
Wrapt in joy and artless song;
Love they talk of, and what not—
So they praise this envy'd spot;
When the dusky night draws near,
The ladies and the tea appear;
Now our mirth is more refin'd,
Suiting more their gentle mind,
All contending for their smile
Thus another hour beguile;
Ever be such pleasures new;
Joys less simple are less true.

W. B.

has favoured the world. He goes into our country to learn, if any thing valuable can be learned, concerning the state of agriculture, and to communicate his knowledge to such gentlemen as wish to improve their estates by such methods of enlightened culture as none but people of good fortune can employ, especially in the beginning. But examples may be given that hereafter will be useful, when you can prevail on yourselves to let the body of your people into an interest in the prosperity of their country. Your Lordship will think it odd, that I can conclude a letter to you without saying a word on the state of public affairs. But what can I say that will be pleasing to a mind formed like yours? Ireland has missed the most glorious opportunity ever indulged by Heaven to a subordinate state—that of being the safe and certain mediator in the quarrels of a great empire. She has chosen, instead of being the arbiter of peace, to be a feeble party in the war waged against the principle of her own liberties. But I beg pardon for censuring, or seeming to censure, what I perhaps so little comprehend. It certainly is much above me. Here we are, as we are. We have our little dejections for disappointments, our little triumphs for advantages, our little palliatives for disgraces, in a contest that no good fortune can make less than ruinous. I return to Mr. Young, whom I am sure you will receive with the hospitality which you always show to men of merit. Mrs. Burke joins me in our best compliments to Lady Charlemont. Your Lordship, I trust, believes that I have the most affectionate concern in what-

ever relates to your happiness, and that I have the honour to be ever, my dear Lord,

"Your most faithful and
"Obliged humble servant,
"EDMUND BURKE."

At a literary dinner party at Sir Joshua Reynolds's about this time, Johnson's epitaph on Goldsmith became the subject of conversation, when various emendations being proposed, and it being agreed that an English would be more appropriate than the Latin one, as well as more consonant to the wishes of their deceased companion and friend, the only difficulty was who should undertake the task of announcing this act of learned rebellion, to what Smollett happily called, "The great Cham of literature."

A round-robin, in the manner of discontented sailors, so as to conceal who signed the remonstrance first, being jocularly proposed, was in the same spirit adopted; and Dr. Barnard, Dean of Derry, and afterwards Bishop of Limerick, who died in 1806, drew up one accordingly, replete with wit and humour. This however being deemed to exhibit more levity than Johnson would like, Mr. Burke seized the pen, and promptly produced the following, which, as Boswell remarks, shows the facility and ease with which he handled smaller matters as well as the greatest.

"We, the circumscribers, having read with great pleasure an intended Epitaph for the monument of Dr. Goldsmith, which, considered abstractedly, ap-

pears to be, for elegant composition and masterly style, in every respect worthy of the pen of its learned author, are yet of opinion, that the character of the deceased as a writer, particularly as a poet, is perhaps not delineated with all the exactness which Dr. Johnson is capable of giving it. We, therefore, with deference to his superior judgment, humbly request, that he would at least take the trouble of revising it, and of making such additions and alterations as he shall think proper upon a farther perusal. But if we might venture to express our wishes, they would lead us to request that he would write the Epitaph in English rather than in Latin; as we think that the memory of so eminent an English writer ought to be perpetuated in the language to which his works are likely to be so lasting an ornament: which we also know to have been the opinion of the late Doctor himself."

Round the circle in which this was written were signed the names Edm. Burke, Thos. Franklin, Ant. Chamier, G. Colman, W. Vaskell, J. Reynolds, W. Forbes, T. Barnard, R. B. Sheridan, P. Metcalf, E. Gibbon, Jos. Warton. Sir Joshua carried it, and received for answer from Johnson, "that he would never consent to disgrace the walls of Westminster Abbey with an English inscription."—"I wonder," said he, "that Joe Warton, a scholar by profession, should be such a fool;" adding, "I should have thought 'Mund Burke too would have had more sense."

The terms in which this was couched indicate Mr. Burke's regard for Dr. Johnson's feelings, which on

such matters were irritable enough; and Johnson in turn, though in general he cared not whose feelings he hurt, would exhibit much courtesy to those of Burke. When Goldsmith talked on one occasion of the difficulty of living on very intimate terms with a person from whom you differed on an important topic, Johnson replied, "Why, Sir, you must shun the subject as to which you disagree. For instance, I can live very well with Burke; I love his knowledge, his genius, his diffusion, and affluence of conversation; but I would not talk to him of the Rockingham party."

In recurring to the subject of epitaphs, Mr. Burke, it may be observed, conceived the vernacular language of a country to be the most fitting for mortuary inscriptions, as though possibly not so durable as the Latin, yet sufficiently so to be intelligible as long as it was likely to be preserved, with the advantage of being universally understood. The Greeks used no Latin, and the Latins no Greek inscriptions. His own practice accorded with this opinion; that on Lord Rockingham, and the character of Sir Joshua Reynolds, are admirable; it is also said he wrote one for Lord Chatham. The following, written about this time, upon an intimate political friend, is in Bushley Church, Worcestershire; few know it to be his, never having been published in any work relating to him; and though not unworthy of his pen, it is more deficient in that force and condensation which distinguish the others alluded to. The same may be said of that on Sir George Saville, hereafter to be noticed.

To the Memory of
WILLIAM DOWDESWELL,
Representative in Parliament for the County
of Worcester,
Chancellor of the Exchequer in the years
1765 and 1766, and a Member of the
King's Privy Council;
A Senator for twenty years;
A Minister for one;
A virtuous citizen for his whole life;
A man of unshaken constancy, inflexible integrity,
unremitted industry.
His mind was generous, open, sincere.
His manners plain, simple, and noble;
Rejecting all sorts of duplicity and disguise
as useless to his designs, and odious
to his nature.
His understanding
was comprehensive, steady, vigorous,
made for the practical business of the State.
In debate he was clear, natural, and convincing.
His knowledge in all things which con-
cerned his duty, profound.
He understood beyond any man of his time
the revenues of his country;
which he preferred to every thing—
except its liberties.
He was a perfect master of the law of Parliament,
And attached to its privileges until they
were set up against the rights of the
people.
All the proceedings
which have weakened government, endangered
freedom, and distracted the
British Empire, were by him
strenuously opposed;
And his last efforts,
under which his health sunk,
were to preserve his country from a civil
war,

which, being unable to prevent, he had
not the misfortune to see.
He was not more respectable on the public
scene
than amiable in private life.
Immersed in the greatest affairs,
he never lost the ancient, native, genuine
English character of a Country Gentle-
man.
Disdaining and neglecting no office in life,
he was an ancient municipal Magistrate,
with great care and clear judgment
administering justice, maintaining the
police, relieving the distresses, and
regulating the manners, of the
people in his neighbour-
hood.
An husband and father
the kindest, gentlest, most indulgent.
He was every thing in his family except
what he gave up to his country.

His widow, who labours with life in order to form the minds of his eleven children to the resemblance of their father, erects this monument.

The tenor of the Address (1776-77), and a motion by Lord John Cavendish, Nov. 6, 1776, respecting a proclamation of General Howe at New York, drew from Mr. Burke, in an animated address, some intemperate remarks; for which the great interests at stake, and the decided conviction of our whole system of policy being wrong, forms the best apology.

Towards Christmas, a resolution was taken by the Rockingham party to secede from Parliament on all questions connected with America, utter silence being in their opinion the next best step to disregarded admonition. An Address to his Majesty, explanatory of their views and reasons, which was meant to be

presented in form by the leading members of both Houses, and another of similar tenor to the colonies, were drawn up by Mr. Burke, and appear in his works; the former a bold, and dignified, and elaborate paper; the latter perhaps not quite so good.

It is pretty certain the design did not originate with him; but when applied to for his sentiments, he, in a letter to the Marquis of Rockingham, dated Jan. 6th, 1777, seems to approve the design. Yet at the same time the objections are so fully and ably stated, with so clear a foresight of all the probable consequences, remote and immediate, and the little hope of its effectual accomplishment from the clashing interests and feelings of the minority, that the reader is impelled to draw a directly opposite conclusion to that of the writer. So thought the Marquis. For after the receipt of this letter, the interview with the King, the delivery of the memorial, and the attempt at positive and general secession, such as was at first contemplated, were abandoned.

That such a decisive measure never can be proper under any circumstances, is perhaps saying too much. That it should be often resorted to, or in any case but formidable and pressing necessity and the most obvious folly on the part of the majority, can only indicate more of anger than of wisdom. The crisis was certainly one of the most momentous ever experienced by the country; yet to secede under such circumstances, was not to meet, but to fly from the danger; and in the then temper of the nation, would have only drawn disapprobation from one half of the people, and, probably, ridicule from the other. Persuasion may in time do much, but silence can

make few converts; to desert the field is not the way to subdue the enemy. Frequent failure in opposing what he may think the worst policy, and in accomplishing his own most conscientious designs, are natural conditions in the existence of a Member of Parliament, for which he who does not come prepared has not adequately considered the obligations of the office.

A leader of Opposition indeed may imagine that in debating, he is only playing the game of the Minister, by throwing out hints from which the latter so far profits as to be enabled to prolong his power. It is also extremely discouraging to be constantly outvoted, when possibly not out-argued; to spend time and breath, "to watch, fast, and sweat, night after night," as Mr. Burke himself forcibly expresses it, in the forlorn hope of constant minorities. No person felt this more than himself; yet none has more ably stated the necessity, and even the advantages resulting to the country and to the individual from a well-directed opposition, than he has done, in a conversation with Sir Joshua Reynolds.

"Mr. Burke," said he, "I do not mean to flatter; but when posterity reads one of your speeches in Parliament, it will be difficult to believe that you took so much pains, knowing with certainty that it could produce no effect; that not one vote would be gained by it."

"Waving your compliment to me," replied the orator, "I shall say in general that it is very well worth while for a man to take pains to speak well in Parliament. A man who has vanity speaks to display his talents; and if a man speaks well, he

gradually establishes a certain reputation and consequence in the general opinion, which sooner or later will have its political reward. Besides, though not one vote is gained, a good speech has its effect. Though an act which has been ably opposed passes into a law, yet in its progress it is modelled, it is softened in such a manner that we see plainly the Minister has been told, that the members attached to him are so sensible of its injustice or absurdity, from what they have heard, that it must be altered."

"The House of Commons," he continued in reply to some other remarks, "is a mixed body; I except the minority, which I hold to be pure (*smiling*), but I take the whole House. It is a mass by no means pure, but neither is it wholly corrupt, though there is a large proportion of corruption in it. There are many Members who generally go with the Minister, who will not go all lengths. There are many honest well-meaning country gentlemen who are in Parliament only to keep up the consequence of their families. Upon most of these a good speech will have influence."

When it was remarked, there were always in Parliament a majority, who from various motives, interested and disinterested, inclined to the support of government, he observed, "True, Sir; that majority will always follow—

"Quo clamor vocat et turba faventium."

Sir Joshua asked, what would be the consequence if a Minister, sure of a majority, were to resolve that there should be no speaking at all on his side?

Mr. Burke—" He must soon go out. That plan has been already tried, but it was found it would not do."

His position at this time with those who supported the war was somewhat peculiar, though to a public man not unexpected. He had been long bitterly reviled as the factious though eloquent advocate of rebellious America; and he was now, for such is political hostility, almost equally abused for preserving on the same subject what was termed a factious silence: and occasionally Lord Rockingham was as much sneered at by the ministerial writers for being directed by an Irish Secretary, as the King had recently been abused by Opposition for being under the influence of a Scotch favourite.

To explain more at large to his constituents his reasons for seceding, and his general views on American matters, he drew up and published in April, 1777, the famous " Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol," one of his best pamphlets, which, though written for a momentary purpose, contains within it principles as to public matters which must ever live. He condemns by allusion, rather than in direct terms, the speculations of Drs. Price and Priestley, which went to destroy all authority, as well as of those who fell into the other extreme of enforcing it beyond due discretion; and the whole is couched in a warmer strain than he had hitherto employed against the authors of the war. The following solemn warning is only one among many instances of the prophetic spirit he displayed in this as in most other great questions:

" I think I know America. If I do not, my ignorance is incurable, for I have spared no pains to

understand it; and I do most solemnly assure those of my constituents who put any sort of confidence in my industry and integrity, that every thing that has been done there has arisen from a total misconception of the object; that our means of originally holding America, that our means of reconciling with it after a quarrel, of recovering it after separation, of keeping it after victory, did depend, and must depend, in their several stages and periods, upon a total renunciation of that unconditional submission which has taken such possession of the minds of violent men."

A reply to this came from the eccentric Earl of Abingdon, also a member of Opposition, who, educated at Geneva, had caught the spirit of the democratical principles of that state, and, with more zeal than discretion or good sense, is said to have made a present to Congress of an estate which he possessed in America. In the House of Lords he possessed little weight; in the press he made a still worse figure against such an opponent, who on this occasion did not deign to reply,—a mark of contempt which nettled his Lordship not a little;—though an anonymous writer assailed and exposed him with considerable powers of ridicule.

In the midst of this political bustle, a claim was also made upon his opinion in a matter of taste. That extraordinary character Barry, who possessed neither time that he could justly spare, nor wealth to support him in its progress (having at its commencement something less than a guinea in the world that he could call his own), had undertaken to decorate the great room of the Society of Arts

with paintings gratuitously, and now solicited Mr. Burke to communicate his ideas on the most appropriate designs. From the following answer to this application, there is perhaps little doubt that whatever merit there be in those great works, some portion of it is due to him; the remark of Dr. Johnson, when he saw them in 1783, being, "Whatever the hand may have done, the mind has done its part. There is a grasp of mind there which you will find no-where else."

"To James Barry, Esq.

"Mr. Burke presents his best compliments to Mr. Barry, and begs pardon for making use of another's hand in giving him his thanks for the great honour he has done him by inscribing to him the print of Job; as well as for the prints sent to his son Richard of the other five designs: but being obliged to go out in great haste, after having been engaged in business for the whole morning, he is under the necessity of dictating this note while he is dressing.

"Mr. Barry does him too much honour in thinking him capable of giving him any hints towards the conduct of the great design in which Mr. Burke is very happy to find he is engaged. Mr. Burke is, without any affectation, thoroughly convinced that he has no skill whatsoever in the art of painting; but he will very cheerfully turn his thoughts towards recollecting passages of modern or middle history, relative to the cultivation of the arts and manufactures; and Mr. Barry will judge, better than he can, whether they are such as will answer his purpose.

" Mr. Burke will have the pleasure of waiting on Mr. Barry, to communicate to him what occurs to him on the subject, at his first leisure moment."

The debts of the Civil List, and an increase of its annual amount, brought Mr. Burke forward again, severely censuring the wastefulness of Ministry; and his interposition, in a happy mixture of argument and irony, saved Alderman Sawbridge, whose language was indecorous and disrespectful towards his Majesty, from public reproof.

On another occasion an opponent was soon afterwards silenced by his wit. During one of the debates on Lord Pigot's recall from Madras, he had twice given way to other speakers, when observing the Chairman of the India Company proceeding to read a variety of well-known public papers instead of adducing any new arguments, he interrupted him by observing, " That if it were the object of the honourable member to tire and thin the House by reading all the heavy folios on the table, he supposed in courtesy he must submit; but to prepare for the task, he begged leave to send for his night-cap ;" which producing general laughter, was followed by a shout of—go on ! go on ! The hint of the night-cap, however, has been so far improved upon by a mob-orator of the present day, as to have been actually produced as a threat of persevering in efforts to address indignant and impatient auditors, who would not otherwise give him a hearing.

On the discussion of this subject, in a very masterly manner, in connexion with the treatment of Lord Pigot by the contradictory votes of the

India proprietors, he was cheered in an unprecedented manner, exciting, in the language of contemporary writers, "such sudden and extraordinary bursts of approbation as were not warranted by the usual practice of the House," and which in return produced some sharp animadversions from the other side, "that the wit displayed in turning the Company's late resolutions and conduct into ridicule, was as ill-placed and as improperly applied, as the theatrical applause which it produced was irregular and indecent."

It was on this question that he first threw out doubts on the conduct of Mr. Hastings; partly through communications from the Pigot family, with which he was acquainted; partly from other friends resident in India, among whom was the late Sir Philip Francis, a man of superior talents, independent mind, and an abhorrence of any thing resembling oppression, little inferior to that of Mr. Burke himself.

To this gentleman, with whom he had been early acquainted, he wrote a letter, of which the following is an extract, on the rising of Parliament, strenuously recommending to his good offices his old friend and associate William Burke, then proceeding to India to better his fortune. This gentleman soon became Agent to the Rajah of Tanjore, and afterwards Deputy Paymaster-General for India, supplying Edmund, it is said, with much and minute information respecting that country.

" Westminster, 9th of June, 1777.

" My dear Sir,

" Our common friend, John Bourke, informs me that you still retain that kindness which you were so good to express towards me before you left London. This wide disconnected empire will frequently disperse those who are dear to one another; but, if this dispersion of their persons does not loosen their regards, it every now and then gives such unexpected opportunities of meeting, as almost compensate the pain of separation, and furnishes means of kind offices, and mutual services, which make even absence and distance the causes of new endearment and continued remembrance.

" These thoughts occur to me too naturally as my only comforts in parting with a friend, whom I have tenderly loved, highly valued, and continually lived with, in an union not to be expressed, quite since our boyish years. Indemnify me, my dear Sir, as well as you can, for such a loss, by contributing to the fortune of my friend. Bring him home with you and at his ease, under the protection of your opulence. You know what his situation has been, and what things he might have surely kept, and infinitely increased, if he had not had those feelings which make a man worthy of fortune. Remember that he asks those favours which nothing but his sense of honour prevented his having it in his power to bestow. This will be a powerful recommendation to a heart like yours. Let Bengal protect a spirit and rectitude which are no longer tolerated in England.

"I do not know, indeed, that he will visit your kingdom; but, if he should, I trust he will find a friend there whose manner of serving him will not be in the style of those who acquit themselves of a burthen. Mr. Burke's first views, indeed, are at Madras; but all India is now closely connected; and your influence and power are such, that you may serve him materially even there. I will not wrong your friendship by pressing this matter any further, but it is indeed near to my heart.

"I say nothing of your Eastern politics. The affairs of America, which are as important, and more distracted, have almost entirely engrossed the attention which I am able to give to any thing. . . . France gives all the assistance to the colonies which is consistent with the appearance of neutrality. Time is to show whether she will proceed further, or whether America can maintain herself in the present struggle, without a more open declaration, and more decided effort from that power. At present the Ministers seem confident that France is resolved to be quiet. If the Court of Versailles be so pacific, I assure you it is in defiance of the wishes and opinions of that whole nation."

At home, Mr. Burke's son, a promising young man, failed in a trial for academical distinction at Oxford, in a theme admirably adapted to the depth and discrimination of the powers of the father, "The Origin and Use of Printing."

To Mr. Fox, who, with Lord John Townshend, spent the summer in Ireland in order to gain a nearer view of its interior politics, he wrote a con-

fidential and interesting letter, in October, on the state of parties, giving the most friendly and disinterested advice on the best line of public conduct for him to pursue, and giving his opinion on the public feeling in England in the following characteristic passage :—

" As to that popular humour, which is the medium we float in, if I can discern any thing at all of its present state, it is far worse than I have ever known, or could ever imagine it. The faults of the people are not popular vices; at least they are not such as grow out of what we used to take to be the English temper and character. The greatest number have a sort of an heavy, lumpish acquiescence in Government, without much respect or esteem for those that compose it. I really cannot avoid making some very unpleasant prognostics from this disposition of the people. I think many of the symptoms must have struck you ; I will mention one or two, that are to me very remarkable.

" You must know that at Bristol we grow, as an election interest, and even as a party interest, rather stronger than we were when I was chosen. We have just now a majority in the corporation. In this state of matters, what, think you, have they done? They have voted their freedom to Lord Sandwich, and Lord Suffolk !—to the first at the very moment when the American privateers were domineering in the Irish Sea, and taking the Bristol traders in the Bristol Channel ; to the latter, when his remonstrances on the subject of captures were the jest of Paris and of Europe.

" This fine step was taken, it seems, in honour of

the zeal of these two profound statesmen in the prosecution of John the Painter; so totally negligent are they of every thing essential, and so long and so deeply affected with trash the most low and contemptible; just as if they thought the merit of Sir John Fielding was the most shining point in the character of great ministers, in the most critical of all times, and, of all others, the most deeply interesting to the commercial world! My best friends in the corporation had no other doubts on the occasion, than whether it did not belong to me, by right of my representative capacity, to be the bearer of this auspicious compliment. In addition to this, if it could receive any addition, they now employ me to solicit, as a favour of no small magnitude, that, after the example of Newcastle, they may be suffered to arm vessels for their own defence in the Channel. Their memorial, under the seal of Merchants' Hall, is now lying on the table before me. Not a soul has the least sensibility on finding themselves, now for the first time, obliged to act as if the community were dissolved, and, after enormous payments towards the common protection, each part was to defend itself, as if it were a separate state. I don't mention Bristol as if that were the part furthest gone in this mortification. Far from it; I know, that there is rather a little more life in us than in any other place. In Liverpool they are literally almost ruined by this American war; but they love it, as they suffer from it. In short, from whatever I see, and from whatever quarter I hear, I am convinced, that every thing, that is not absolute stagnation, is evidently a party spirit, very adverse to

our politics, and to the principles from whence they arise.

" There are manifest marks of the resurrection of the Tory party. They no longer criticise, as all disengaged people in the world will, on the acts of Government; but they are silent under every evil, and hide and cover up every ministerial blunder and misfortune, with the officious zeal of men who think they have a party of their own to support in power. The Tories do universally think their power and consequence involved in the success of this American business. The clergy are astonishingly warm in it; and what the Tories are, when embodied and united with their natural head, the crown, and animated by their clergy, no man knows better than yourself.

" As to the Whigs, I think them far from extinct. They are, what they always were (except by the able use of opportunities), by far the weakest party in this country. They have not yet learned the application of their principles to the present state of things; and as to the dissenters, the main effective part of the Whig strength, they are, to use a favourite expression of our American campaign style, ' not all in force.' They will do very little; and, as far as I can discern, are rather intimidated than provoked at the denunciations of the court in the Archbishop of York's sermon. I thought that sermon rather imprudent when I first saw it; but it seems to have done its business."

A present from Dr. Robertson, of his History of America, then recently published, drew from Mr. Burke an interesting letter, critical and compli-

mentary, and alluding more especially to his own favourite topic, the study of human nature, which he considered the most useful of all studies, and was accustomed to say that "a statesman deficient in this knowledge was not master of half his business."

"I am perfectly sensible of the very flattering distinction I have received in your thinking me worthy of so noble a present as that of your History of America. I have, however, suffered my gratitude to lie under some suspicion, by delaying my acknowledgments of so great a favour. But my delay was only to render my obligation to you more complete, and my thanks, if possible, more merited. The close of the session brought a great deal of troublesome though not important business on me at once. I could not go through your work at one breath at that time, though I have done it since.

"I am now enabled to thank you, not only for the honour you have done me, but for the great satisfaction and the infinite variety and compass of instruction I have received from your incomparable work. Every thing has been done which was so naturally to be expected from the author of the History of Scotland, and of the Age of Charles the Fifth. I believe few books have done more than this towards clearing up dark points, correcting errors, and removing prejudices. You have too the rare secret of rekindling an interest on subjects that had so often been treated, and in which any thing that could feed a vital flame appeared to have been consumed. I am sure I read many parts of your

history with that fresh concern and anxiety which attend those who are not previously apprized of the event. You have besides thrown quite a new light on the present state of the Spanish provinces, and furnished both materials and hints for a rational theory of what may be expected from them in future.

"The part which I read with the greatest pleasure, is the discussion on the manners and character of the inhabitants of that new world. I have always thought with you, that we possess at this time very great advantage towards the knowledge of human nature. We need no longer go to history to trace it in all stages and periods. History, from its comparative youth, is but a poor instructor. When the Egyptians called the Greeks children in antiquities, we may well call them children; and so we may call all those nations which were able to trace the progress of society only within their own limits. But now the great map of mankind is unrolled at once, and there is no state or gradation of barbarism, and no mode of refinement which we have not at the same moment under our view; the very different civility of Europe and of China; the barbarism of Persia and of Abyssinia; the erratic manners of Tartary and Arabia; the savage of North America, and of New Zealand. Indeed you have made a noble use of the advantages you have had. You have employed philosophy to judge on manners, and from manners you have drawn new resources for philosophy. I only think that in one or two points you have hardly done justice to the savage character.

"There remains before you a great field. *Peri-*

culosæ plenum opus aleæ tractas, et incedis per ignes suppositos cineri doloso. Whenever these ashes will be spread over the present fire, God knows. I am heartily sorry that we are now supplying you with that kind of dignity and concern which is purchased to history at the expense of mankind. I had rather by far that Dr. Robertson's pen were only employed in delineating the humble scenes of political economy, than the great events of a civil war. If our statesmen had read the book of human nature instead of the journals of the House of Commons, and history instead of acts of parliament, we should not by the latter have furnished out so ample a page for the former."

Contrary to the opinion of Johnson, who spoke slightingly of his labours in history, and who in fact cared little for such subjects, Robertson, whom he had known for many years, was with Burke a favourite writer, at least as to his manner. Not so Gibbon; on whose first volume appearing, the preceding year, he called on Sir Joshua Reynolds a day or two afterwards, and, in the hearing of Mr. Northcote, pronounced the style vicious and affected, savouring too much of literary tinsel and frippery; a sentence which all the best judges have since confirmed.

The next session, 1777—1778, brought back the seceders of Opposition to the performance of their public duties. Those of Mr. Burke, who grasped the labouring oar as his particular province, were this year unusually diversified and fatiguing. His seat at least was not a sinecure; whatever else he

spared, he never spared himself; he seemed often to be trying the experiment, what compass of political interests and business it was possible for the human mind to embrace and retain; what degree of labour in expounding them to endure. A few of the leading points in this, as in all the other sessions, are alone necessary to be alluded to here.

On the first day of the session, November 18th, his address was thus noticed by a contemporary—

"If it were possible, we would give a detail of a speech which, for the space of nearly two hours, commanded the attention, and excited the laughter of all, and drew tears from the sympathizing few; but we must omit all those changes of ridicule which were rung by Mr. Burke's ingenuity upon the defence which Lord North made in answer to the charge against General Burgoyne's proclamation. We must also pass over his proofs of the futility of our conquests in the Colonies, and touch only on that pathetic supplication which he made to the House, to seize the present happy moment to attempt an accommodation, when neither elated with insolent victory, nor debased by abject defeat, we could with honour to ourselves make such proposals to our colonists, as they could without dishonour accept.

"He apostrophized with a degree of enthusiasm upon the noble spirit of men, who, if they had not been rebels, he could have been lavish in praising; of women who, reduced by the ruin of civil discord to the most horrible situation of distress and poverty, had constancy, generosity, and public spirit enough, to strip the blankets, in a freezing season, from themselves and their infants, to send them to the

camp, and preserve that army which they had sent out to fight for their liberty. And shall Britons, said Mr. Burke, overlook such virtue? And will they persist in oppressing it? Shall we give them no alternative but unconditional submission? A three years' war has not terrified them, distressed as they are, from their great purpose.—Let us now, over such generous bosoms, try the power of lenity."

The navy estimates, the suspension of the habeas corpus Act, Mr. Fox's motion, December 2d, for an inquiry into the state of the nation, the ordnance estimates, the raising of troops without consent of Parliament, and private aids to the Crown, furnished opportunities for assailing the war and its conductors with great effect.

On the 6th of February he introduced a motion for papers relative to the military employment of the Indians in the war in America, by a speech three hours and a half long, which excited not only extraordinary testimonies of admiration, but was considered by all who heard him the very best he had ever delivered. The theme, as connected with the interests of humanity, possessed much interest, and in itself was peculiarly fitted to display some of his most popular qualities as a speaker. Strangers being excluded from the gallery, no tolerable report, or even abstract of it, has ever been published, or perhaps preserved. The pathetic episode, however, of Miss Macrae, a young lady betrothed to a British officer, and entrusted to two Indians to convey her to a place of safety, but who, quarrelling by the road about the division of the expected quantity of rum promised as their reward, savagely murdered

her at once to end the dispute—was so vividly painted as to excite an emotion of abhorrence against such auxiliaries throughout the country.

Heated by the powers of the speaker, Colonel Barré, in a fit of enthusiasm, offered to nail up the speech, if published, on every church door in the kingdom, by the side of the proclamation for a general fast. Governor Johnstone thought it fortunate for the two noble lords (North and Germaine) that there were no strangers present, or their enthusiasm and indignation would have excited the people to tear them to pieces on their way home from the House. Sir George Saville said to many of his friends—"he who did not hear that speech, has not witnessed the greatest triumph of eloquence within memory."

After all, it may be doubted whether this display of oratorical art and real humanity was not a party question. Congress would have engaged these allies if England had not anticipated her; and Lord Chatham, though venting a torrent of indignation on the same side of the question, in the House of Lords, could not disprove that the same allies were employed under his own administration twenty years before.

Eleven days afterwards another tacit tribute to the wisdom of Mr. Burke's advice for an amicable adjustment of the differences with the Colonies, appeared in a conciliatory plan of Lord North, taken chiefly from that proposed by the former three years before. It was supported also by the same arguments, to the great indignation of many of his Lordship's high Tory supporters in the House. Mr. Fox

tauntingly congratulated the noble lord on at length becoming a proselyte to the doctrines of his honourable friend. The time, however, was gone by in which they could have had effect. His lordship, though a man of talent and personal integrity, wanted enlargement of mind for the circumstances in which he was placed; as a minister he was too often a long march in the rear of events; his remedial measures came when they were forced, not voluntarily proffered; he could foresee little till it pressed upon him with overpowering necessity.

America now would accept nothing short of independence, and the junction of France to enable her to attain this object, for which the Minister seemed quite unprepared though often dinned in his ears by the member for Bristol, seemed to render it certain. Under this impression it became a question with Opposition whether to acknowledge the independence of that country at once, and by so doing secure commercial preferences to the mother country —an alliance offensive and defensive—and other advantages accruing from the kindly feelings produced by this concession and our remaining influence and old connexion; or, by persisting to contend for what appeared no longer attainable, not only lose these benefits ourselves, but throw them into the scale of France, our constant and watchful enemy.

To the former, as an unavoidable result, Mr. Burke, after much deliberation, inclined: "not," he said, "as a matter of choice, but of hard and overpowering necessity;—in the latter light only he regarded it. On the day that he first heard of the American states having claimed independency, it made him sick at heart; it struck him to the soul,

because he saw it was a claim essentially injurious to Great Britain and one which she could never get rid of; never! never! never!—It was not to be thought, therefore, that he wished for the independency of America. Far from it. He felt it as a circumstance exceedingly detrimental to the fame, and exceedingly detrimental to the interests of his country. But when, by a wrong management of the cards, a gamester had lost much, it was right for him to make the most of the game as it then stood, and to take care that he did not lose more."

Lord Chatham as strenuously opposed any admission of the kind; declaring that the independence of America once acknowledged, the sun of England was set for ever, and, in urging this sentiment in the House of Lords, was seized with that illness which terminated in his death.—Deficient in some respects, and open to censure in many others, he was nevertheless the greatest war Minister this country ever had. But he was no prophet; time, which has belied his prediction as to the dependance of England on America, has shown the superior judgment of the leader of the Rockingham party. The latter, on the death of this great man being announced, immediately urged in his place the necessity for the nation showing its sense of his services by a provision for his family, in addition to all the posthumous honours it could bestow. He was also one of the pall-bearers at the funeral.

A proposition by Lord Nugent to revise a series of oppressive restrictions which existed on the trade of Ireland naturally claimed the serious consideration and support of Mr. Burke. His great effort was in

a speech on the 6th of May, exhibiting a more comprehensive yet practical view of the commercial condition, intercourse, interests, and capabilities of the kingdoms, contrasting their comparative advantages and defects, than had ever been given there before. The grievance being undeniable, both sides of the House agreed at once to the remedy, by removing them, when suddenly a number of hostile petitions pouring in from the trading and manufacturing towns, diverted the Minister from his purpose; and thus, though a narrow and selfish system of policy had already driven America into revolt, yet, with the fact before their eyes, the very same policy again risked the loss of Ireland.

Bristol taking a conspicuous part in the endeavour to repress the industry of the sister island, called upon her representative to support her views. The dilemma occasioned by this demand could not be otherwise than unpleasant to him. But regarding principle above every consideration of prudence, he manfully avowed, that to comply with this desire, would be to sin against his conscience, against the first principles of justice, against the general prosperity of the empire, and, however his constituents might think, against the truest interests of trade itself.

"If, from this conduct," said he, "I shall forfeit their suffrages at an ensuing election, it will stand on record an example to future representatives of the Commons of England, that one man at least had dared to resist the desires of his constituents, when his judgment assured him they were wrong."

A late writer,* from whom to differ requires

* Moore's Life of Sheridan, p. 210, 4to. edit.—published since the first edition of this work.

some effort of resolution, says that neither Mr. Fox nor Mr. Burke applied the principles of political economy to the proper treatment of Ireland at this time. With regard to Mr. Fox, the statement may be correct; but it is certainly erroneous as applied to Burke, who pushed the matter as far as it was *then* prudent to go.—If it was not so far as a statesman of the present day deems necessary, this can be no impeachment either of his wisdom or of his judgment, considering the general ignorance and prejudice prevailing in the public mind on such matters at that period, and the risk he ran of losing every thing by asking for too much at once.—As to the general principles of political economy, Mr. Burke was the first who attempted to introduce and render them familiar to the House of Commons: Mr. Fox, on the contrary, professed not to understand or to care for them.

To state his reasons more fully for declining compliance with this claim upon his services, he wrote in April and May, 1778, 'Two Letters to Gentlemen of Bristol on the Bills relative to the Trade of Ireland.' These expound, in a few touches, some of the chief principles of commerce; such as the advantage of freedom of intercourse between all parts of the same kingdom; of the necessity for reciprocity of benefits; of the evils of restriction and monopoly; of the advantage to ourselves of all our customers, particularly our fellow-subjects, as the Irish were, being rich rather than poor; and that the gain of others is not necessarily our loss, but on the contrary an advantage, from causing a greater demand.

Political economists now consider these truths the

mere alphabet of their art, while merchants, if they do not deny them in theory, can rarely be brought to approve many of them in practice. Exclusions and restrictions, the depression of one body of individuals or district of country to exalt another, belong almost as much to their system as the invoice and ledger. His arguments, which were then in a great degree new, produced little effect in the quarter he wished; the people of Bristol could not be convinced there was equity or policy in giving a free trade to Ireland; his determination, however, continued unchanged, adding—"While I remain under this unalterable and powerful conviction, you will not wonder at the *decided* part I take. It is my custom so to do when I see my way clearly before me; and when I know that I am not misled by any passion, or any personal interest, which, in this case, I am very sure I am not."

Another offence in the eyes of his constituents was in vigorously supporting Sir George Saville's Bill for the Relief of the Roman Catholics, then much oppressed by the severity of the penal laws existing and in force against them. It was in fact believed among his friends, like many other Bills brought forward by others, to be wholly his own, though not formally avowed in order to avoid popular odium; and to come with more weight as the measure of an opulent and respected country gentleman. Its justice was immediately recognized by the almost unanimous votes of both Houses of Parliament.

During the progress of the measure frequent correspondence took place with Mr. Pery, Speaker of the Irish House of Commons, to whom a letter

written by Mr. Burke, July 18th, 1778, on the Heads of a Bill for the Relief of the Dissenters and Roman Catholics of Ireland, is extant in his works. Dublin was then enthusiastic in his praise; a design, warmly seconded by the public, was even announced to him by the same gentleman, of erecting his statue in that city. This contemplated honour proved but a spurt of gratitude, soon forgotten and never since revived; so that this great man, the most illustrious, in many respects, that city or the nation ever produced, who had he been born in Scotland, would be almost deified by the people, has not in Ireland procured a single stone to his memory: the only tributes of respect, known to the writer, being a picture in the examination theatre of Trinity College, and a bust in its library. An unfeigned humility made him shrink from the idea of a statue; and his observations on it, above a year afterwards, in a letter to a member of the Irish Legislature, on her domestic affairs, when his popularity there had declined, are marked by his accustomed force and truth.—

"I too have had my holiday of popularity in Ireland. I have even heard of an intention to erect a statue. I believe my intimate friends know how little that idea was encouraged by me; and I was sincerely glad that it never took effect. Such honours belong exclusively to the tomb—the natural and only period of human inconstancy, with regard either to desert or to opinion; for they are the very same hands which erect, that very frequently (and sometimes with reason enough) pluck down the statue. Had such an unmerited and unlooked for compliment been paid to me two years ago, the

fragments of the piece might at this hour have the advantage of seeing actual service, while they were moving according to the law of projectiles, to the windows of the Attorney-General, or of my old friend Monk Mason."

In a sharp debate on the ordnance estimates, soon after this time, no reply being given to his questions respecting their unusual amount, and the Speaker proceeding to put the question, he declared he would not suffer it to be put until some explanation was given, when, after a pause, it appeared that not one of the board knew any thing practically of the subject. Touching on the point of order, which had been alluded to at the moment, he considered it, he said, contemptible, when, instead of forwarding, it stood in opposition to the substance of their duty, and long afterwards boasted that, during all the years he had sate in Parliament, he had never called any member to order.

The indecisive action of Admiral Keppel with the French fleet, during the summer of 1778, and the dissension to which it gave rise with Sir Hugh Palliser, his second in command, became so much a theme for contention after the meeting of Parliament, that, in fact, almost every man in the nation ranged himself on the side of one or other of the parties.

For the Admiral, who had been taken from the ranks of Opposition to command the fleet, Mr. Burke had a most warm regard, having first met him at the house of Sir Joshua Reynolds, to whom the Admiral had been an early patron; political connexion improved the acquaintance into close and lasting friendship, of which the apostrophe to his

memory, in a letter to a noble lord, is a proof, and, at the same time, perhaps, one of the most eloquent tributes to a dead friend in our language. The Admiral was not less warm in reciprocal admiration, and had declared of Mr. Burke, as well as his old commander Sir Charles Saunders and others of the party, "that if the country were to be saved, it could be only by the virtue and abilities of that wonderful man." When about to undergo the ordeal of a court-martial, Mr. Burke accompanied him to Portsmouth, received from him there his picture, by Mr. Reynolds, as a species of legacy in case the court-martial in their sentence should decide against his honour and character, remained with him during much of the trial, and is reported to have assisted in arranging his defence.

Something of this kind seems to be hinted in a passage of the character of the Admiral just alluded to.—

"I ever looked on Lord Keppel as one of the greatest and best men of his age; and I loved and cultivated him accordingly. He was much in my heart, and I believe I was in his to the very last beat. It was after his trial at Portsmouth that he gave me this picture. With what zeal and anxious affection I attended him through that his agony of glory; what part my son, in the early flush and enthusiasm of his virtue, and the pious passion with which he attached himself to all my connections, took—with what prodigality we both squandered ourselves in courting almost every sort of enmity for his sake,—I believe he felt, just as I should have felt, such friendship on such an occasion.

"I partook indeed of his honour, with several of

the first, and best, and ablest men in the kingdom, but I was behind hand with none of them; and I am sure that if, to the eternal disgrace of this nation, and to the total annihilation of every trace of honour and virtue in it, things had taken a different turn from what they did, I should have attended him to the quarter deck with no less good will and more pride, though with far other feelings, than I partook of the general glow of national joy that attended the justice that was done to his virtue. * *

"Feeling the loss of Lord Keppel at all times, at no time did I feel it so much as on the first day when I was attacked in the House of Lords. Had he lived, that reverend form would have risen in its place, and with a mild paternal reprehension to his nephew the Duke of Bedford, he would have told him that the favour of that gracious Prince who had honoured his virtues with the government of the navy of Great Britain, and with a seat in the hereditary great council of his kingdom, was not undeservedly shown *to the friend of the best portion of his life, and his faithful companion and counsellor* under his rudest trials.*"

Mr. Burke's own interests were about this time, or soon after, attacked by Lord Verney, in a suit in Chancery, calling upon him, in conjunction with his brother Richard and William Burke as partners

* In the debate, Feb. 1, 1781, on Sir Hugh Palliser's appointment to Greenwich Hospital, he said—"No one subject that had ever in the whole course of his life challenged his notice had been studied by him with so much attention and so much care as the transactions of the 27th July, because the honour and the life of the dearest friend he had on earth, made those transactions of the most serious importance to him," and much more to the same effect.

with his Lordship, to bear part of the loss sustained by unsuccessful speculations in the funds. This participation he denied by affidavit; nor was the circumstance probable in itself, or some better evidence of it would have been adduced, than the Peer could bring forward on the occasion; they had not, in fact, been friends for some time; and though his brother Richard might possibly have participated in the transaction, it was scarcely fair to call upon Edmund to pay his debts of honour, for there could be no legal claim. As a considerable degree of misrepresentation has prevailed on this point, it may be necessary to state, that as a holder of India stock, he might have profited by this property as any other man would do, though even this is doubtful; but there is not the slightest foundation for the report of his gambling in the funds, which was not merely at variance with his habits but his principles.

Another charge urged against him, as if it were not a misfortune rather than a fault, was that of being often in debt. Let it be remembered, however, that the rental of his estate was not estimated at more than 600*l.* per annum, which, with his Irish property, occasional supplies, and the produce of his literary labours, formed nearly the whole of his income, after the cessation of the agency for New York. Moving in the sphere of life in which he did, this must be confessed to be a poor pittance; yet out of this, it may be stated without indelicacy, as he more than once mentioned it himself, he contributed to the support of several poorer relations, and this of course could only be effected by very

rigid economy. To one relation near Castletown Roche he allowed 30*l.* per annum out of the property in that vicinity, ever since he came into possession of it in 1765.

He had, in fact, no extravagant propensities to indulge; his domestic arrangements were under the prudent management of his lady: his coach-horses took their turn in the plough; his table, to which men of merit or distinction in every class were always welcome, partook more of neatness and moderation, than parade and profusion. At Beaconsfield, he preserved a frank and cheerful hospitality, which those who enjoyed once were glad of the opportunity to enjoy again; and while in town, he frequently asked political and literary friends to dine on beef-stakes, or a leg of mutton, and occasionally gave little more than his invitation professed.

Another accusation urged against him at this time was, that he displayed much more of ability than of candour in harassing ministry with the most unmeasured condemnation; but the same may be said of all Oppositions; and, looking to the magnitude of the contest, the incapacity shown in its conduct, and the unfortunate results, it will be difficult to say that his censures were unfair, ill-timed, or unjust. Mr. Fox was upon almost all occasions more violent and much more personal, to a degree beyond even the usual parliamentary license; he constantly wore in the House what was considered the American uniform, buff and blue, which Mr. Burke, except when solicited so to do, which was not unfrequently the case, declined to make his common dress. The most moderate men, in fact, lost their equani-

mity on this topic; and Messrs. Wilkes, Sawbridge, and others of the same stamp, were sometimes scurrilous, for on no preceding occasion had debates run so high; and even the House of Lords often forgot its characteristic decorum, in the violence of the language used.

This spirit found ample vent in the session, 1778 and 1779, in a series of motions by Mr. Fox, after the acquittal of Admiral Keppel, on the state of the Navy, March 8th; of Greenwich Hospital; and an address to the King to remove Lord Sandwich, which were supported by Mr. Burke; who also took part on the question of the threatening manifesto of the Commissioners sent to negociate with America: on the state of Ireland, March 12th; on Mr. Dunning's motion respecting the powers of the Admiralty to grant or refuse Courts Martial, March 15th; on an Inquiry into the conduct of the American War, May 13th; on the Budget, May 31st; on a Bill for exemptions for being pressed into the Navy; and on another for limited service in the Army—a measure which he recommended by the strongest arguments, and though it was rejected then, it has since been as wisely as liberally adopted.

In this year, among many of the first characters of the time, he followed his old acquaintance Garrick to the grave, and looking stedfastly towards the place of interment, remarked to one of the gentlemen present, that "the spot was well chosen, for the statue of Shakspeare seemed to point to the grave where the great actor of his works was laid."

It was in the early part of this year that a present from the admired and accomplished Mr. (afterwards

Sir William) Jones, of his translation of the Greek orator Isæus, the master of Demosthenes, whose orations, as explanatory of the laws of property in Athens, are necessarily interesting to a lawyer, though perhaps for the same reason hitherto neglected by grammarians and philologists, drew from Mr. Burke the following reply :—

"MY DEAR SIR, March 12, 1779.

"I give you many thanks for your most obliging and valuable present, and feel myself extremely honoured by this mark of your friendship. My first leisure will be employed in an attentive perusal of an author who had merit enough to fill up a part of your's, and whom you have made accessible to me with an ease and advantage, which one, so many years disused to Greek literature as I have been, could not otherwise have.

"Isæus is an author of whom I know nothing but by fame; I am sure that any idea I had from thence conceived of him, will not be at all lessened by seeing him in your translation. I do not know how it has happened, that orators have hitherto fared worse in the hands of the translators than even the poets; I never could bear to read a translation of Cicero. Demosthenes suffers, I think, somewhat less;—but he suffers greatly; so much, that I must say, that no English reader could well conceive from whence he had acquired the reputation of the first of orators.

"I am satisfied that there is now an eminent exception to this rule, and I sincerely congratulate the public on that acquisition. I am, with the

greatest truth and regard, my dear Sir, your most faithful and obliged humble servant,

"EDMUND BURKE."

Ireland, notwithstanding his renewed endeavours in her favour, being still denied participation in the commerce of the empire, came to a variety of resolutions against importing British manufactures; and with still more effect in the way of threat, formed her memorable volunteer associations, "nothing resembling which," said Lord Sheffield, writing a few years afterwards, "has ever been observed in any country, at least where there was an established government."

Even Scotland was not quiet. The concessions to the Catholics in the preceding year instigated a mob not only to raze their chapels to the ground, but to destroy their private houses and property. A petition from this body, praying for compensation for their losses, and security against further injury, was presented by Mr. Burke, who found an opportunity on this occasion for exercising his wit, though, as a Scripture phrase, perhaps not in the best taste, yet to the great amusement of the House; for observing Lord North to be asleep (a frequent failing of that nobleman in public), at the moment he was attributing the popular excesses to the supineness of those in power, he instantly turned the incident to advantage—"Behold," said he, pointing to the slumbering Minister, "what I have again and again told you, that Government, if not defunct, at least nods; brother Lazarus is not dead, only sleepeth."

CHAPTER VII.

Economical Reform.—Letter on Parliamentary Reform.—Conduct during the Riots.—Intercedes for mercy towards the Rioters.—Elocution Walker.—Slave Trade.—Rejection at Bristol.—The Prince of Wales, Mr. Burke, and the Curate.—Anecdotes of Mr. Burke's humanity and playful humour.—Note to Sir W. Jones.—Opposed to Mr. Fox on the Repeal of the Marriage Act.—Mr. Sheridan.—Shearing the Wolf.—Change of Ministry.—Letter to Dr. Franklin.

DURING the summer of 1779, the dangers of the country had alarmingly increased; no progress was made in subduing America; the expense of the war exceeded all precedent; the enemy's fleet sweeping triumphantly through the Channel, threatened Plymouth and other parts of the coast; and Ireland, in a state of moral, seemed rapidly proceeding to actual, revolt, by riots in Dublin, by the extension of the system and the imposing attitude of the volunteers, by the strong measure of a money-bill for six months only, and by very general resolutions against "the unjust, illiberal, and impolitic selfishness of England."

The speech from the throne, 25th November, recommending her hitherto rejected claims to consideration, drew from the Member for Bristol many bitter taunts on the want of the means, not of the will by Ministry, to coerce her by fire and sword as they had attempted with America. These reproaches, though stigmatized as inflammatory, were perhaps

not undeserved; and the sense of the House was so far with him, that having sat down once or twice from being unable to render himself heard in the more distant parts of it, in consequence of a violent cold and hoarseness, he was pressed by loud and repeated calls from both sides, to proceed. Dire necessity alone had extracted this measure of conciliation from the Minister, upon whom a vote of censure for the neglect and delay, moved by Lord Ossory, Dec. 6th, gave birth to highly-applauded speeches by Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke; the latter remarking, that that which had at first been requested as a favour, was delayed till angrily demanded as a right; till threats extorted what had been denied to entreaties; till England had lost the moment of granting with dignity, and Ireland of receiving with gratitude.

When, however, Lord North introduced his plan of relief, such as it was, he gave it his approval, though without that warmth which the zealous spirits of Ireland expected, and they themselves displayed on the occasion, but which he conceived its tardy and reluctant justice scarcely deserved. Hence arose a misrepresentation there, that he was altogether indifferent to the relief now granted; his popularity therefore sunk at once, both in the land of his birth and in that of his adoption; in Bristol, for conceding any commercial advantage whatever, and in Dublin, for withholding any point, however indifferent or unimportant in itself; a lot to which all statesmen, who act without favour or partiality towards contending interests, are too often exposed.

To remove this impression in Ireland, he wrote

"A Letter to Thomas Burgh, Esq." dated Jan. 1, 1780, explanatory of his views and motives, which, though meant to be private, soon found its way, by the zeal of his friends, into the periodical prints of the time, and in some degree set him right with the more intelligent part of his countrymen.

The ill success of the war, and the increased taxation required to support it, occasioning at this moment loud outries for Parliamentary Reform, and retrenchment of the public expenditure, Mr. Burke dexterously wrested attention from the former, which he had always deemed an unsafe and impracticable measure, to the latter, which he thought was in every respect most desirable and expedient.

Of all men in the House he was perhaps the best qualified for this arduous undertaking by a share of political courage which shrunk from no duty however invidious, and habits of business which, at all times laborious, were on this occasion exerted beyond all precedent. "For my own part," said he, "I have very little to recommend me for this, or for any task, but a kind of earnest and anxious perseverance of mind, which with all its good and all its evil effects is moulded into my constitution." Cautious of experiment, as he professed to be, even to timidity, this feeling formed a pledge, that no crude or showy innovations should be attempted merely because they were new; and his idea of a very cheap government not being necessarily the very best, rendered it certain that nothing really useful should be taken away. He knew too much of human nature, and of the business of the State, to be led astray by visionary schemes of hopeless purity and impossible perfection. The habits of the country, he knew, were any thing

but niggardly toward public offices and public servants. While duty, therefore, required that nothing gross should be permitted to remain, a personal as well as public liberality ensured that no injustice should be inflicted upon individuals; that economy should not become penury, or reform utter extirpation.

His notice of motion, on the 15th December, opened a brief but lucid exposition of the outlines of his plan, to which Opposition gave much praise for the matter and the manner, no one else venturing to say a word on so tender a subject. A slight incident, on this occasion, again showed his dexterity in debate. While enforcing the necessity for frugality, and recommending to the Minister the old and valuable Roman apothegm *magnum vectigal est parsimonia*, he used a false quantity, rendering the second word *vēctĭgal*. Lord North, in a low tone, corrected the error, when Mr. Burke, with his usual presence of mind, turned the mistake to advantage. "The Noble Lord," said he, "hints that I have erred in the quantity of a principal word in my quotation; I rejoice at it; because it gives me an opportunity of repeating the inestimable adage,"—and with increased energy he thundered forth—"*magnum vect-ī-gal est parsimonia.*"

Great as was the idea entertained of his talents, expectation was infinitely surpassed by the production of the plan itself, introduced by the memorable speech of the 11th of February, 1780, which every one conversant with political history has read, and he who has read will not readily forget. No public measure of the century received such general encomium. Few speeches from the Opposition side

of the House ever fell with greater effect than this; and of itself, had he never made any other, would place him in the first rank of orators and practical statesmen, for comprehensiveness of design, minute knowledge of detail, the mingled moderation and justice towards the public and to the persons affected, the wisdom of its general principles, and their application to local objects. As a composition it has been considered the most brilliant combination of powers that ever was, or perhaps can be, devoted to such a topic; and when printed, passed through a great number of editions.

The whole of the scheme was comprised in five bills; embracing the sale of forest lands; the abolition of the inferior royal jurisdictions of Wales, Cornwall, Chester, and Lancaster; of Treasurer, Comptroller, Cofferer, Master, and a variety of inferior officers in the Household; of Treasurer of the Chamber; of the Wardrobe, Jewel, and Robes Offices; of the Boards of Trade, Green-cloth, and of Works; of the office of third Secretary of State; of the Keepers of the Stag, Buck, and Fox Hounds; much of the civil branches of the Ordnance and Mint; of the patent offices of the Exchequer; the regulation of the army, navy, and pension pay offices, and some others; and above all a new arrangement of the Civil List, by which debt should be avoided in future, and priority of payment ensured to the least powerful claimants, the First Lord of the Treasury being the last on the list.

The bare idea of reforming so many offices is astounding to any man of moderate courage; but to reduce or to regulate so many sources of influence,

to place the remedy side by side with the grievance, to encounter the odium of annihilating or diminishing the emoluments of the possessors enjoyed perhaps for years, without notice or injury, was considered the boldest attempt ever made by any member out of office, and supposed to affect too many interests even for the authority of those who were in; putting aside the complication and difficulty presented in every stage of its progress.

"It must remain," said Mr. Dunning in a burst of admiration, "as a monument to be handed down to posterity of his uncommon zeal, unrivalled industry, astonishing abilities, and invincible perseverance. He had undertaken a task big with labour and difficulty; a task that embraced a variety of the most important objects, extensive and complicated; yet such were the eminent and unequalled abilities, so extraordinary the talents and ingenuity, and such the fortunate frame of the honourable gentleman's mind, his vast capacity and happy conception, that in his hands, what must have proved a vast heap of ponderous matter, composed of heterogeneous ingredients, discordant in their nature and opposite in principle, was so skilfully arranged as to become quite simple as to each respective part, dependant on each other; and the whole at the same time so judiciously combined, as to present nothing to almost any mind tolerably intelligent, to divide, puzzle, or distract it."

"Mr. Burke's Reform bill," says the historian Gibbon, "was framed with skill, introduced with eloquence, and supported by numbers. Never can I forget the delight with which that diffusive and

ingenious orator was heard by all sides of the House, and even by those (Gibbon himself, as a Member of the Board of Trade, was one of them) whose existence he proscribed."

"Only one sentiment," remarks another contemporary who voted against the measure, "pervaded the House and the nation, on the unexampled combination of eloquence, labour, and perseverance which had been displayed by their enlightened author. They covered with astonishment and admiration even those who, from principle or from party, appeared most strenuous in opposing the progress of the bill itself through every stage."

Innumerable testimonies of the same kind might be quoted even from some of the Ministry, who were nevertheless ingenious enough to oppose in detail what they applauded in the gross. A considerable part of March, April, and May, were occupied in debating the different clauses: that for abolishing the office of third Secretary of State was lost on the 8th of the former month by a majority of seven, after one of the hardest fought contests ever remembered.

Five days afterwards, however, by the irresistible effect of the wit of the mover, as much as his eloquence, sentence of death was passed on the poor Board of Trade by a majority of eight; the two thousand three hundred folio volumes of its labours, rather unluckily urged by Mr. Eden in its defence, being ridiculed with such inimitable effect by Mr. Burke, as to be, in the opinion of many, the chief cause of condemnation: execution of the sentence, however, was contrived by the ministry to be delayed for the present; and a week afterwards, the sentiments

of the House upon the bill altogether seemed unexpectedly changed by other clauses of importance being rejected by great majorities.

This measure cost him during the session eleven or twelve clever speeches, combining so much labour, ingenuity, and wit, that it became a question in which of these points he excelled. In the debate on the Board of Works (April 28th), "Mr. Burke," said a contemporary, "distinguished himself more than ever by the force of his arguments, the fertility of his invention, and the pleasantry with which he enlivened a matter apparently dry and insipid in itself."

Another writer on the subject (Political Magazine, vol. i. p. 473), says, "It was generally agreed both by members and strangers, that Mr. Burke had been seldom more agreeable in the House of Commons than on this evening. He evidently came down with his mind made up to the fate (rejection) of the remaining clauses of his bill, and therefore treated them with all that ready wit, pleasantry, and good humour which are the real features of his character."

A proposal by Lord North to give the India Company the required three years' notice previous to the dissolution of their charter, produced a speech of great fervour and animation from the Member for Bristol against it; he supported a bill for suspending the elective franchise of revenue officers, and also a motion by Mr. Dunning, for securing the independence of Parliament.

Amid these duties he found time (April 4th) to write a letter on the affairs of Ireland, enforcing his former opinions, to John Merlott, Esq. of Bristol.

Eight days afterwards (April 12th), he addressed another to the chairman of the Buckinghamshire meeting for obtaining Parliamentary Reform; a scheme which he considered ineffectual to its intended purpose, and pregnant with danger in its general effects on the Constitution. The result of his inquiries we may ascertain from the following passage :—

"I am now growing old. I have from my very early youth been conversant in reading and thinking upon the subject of our laws and constitution, as well as upon those of other times and other countries. I have been for fifteen years a very laborious Member of Parliament; and in that time have had great opportunities of seeing with my own eyes the working of the machine of our government; and remarking where it went smoothly and did its business, and where it checked in its movements, or where it damaged its work.

"I have also had and used the opportunities of conversing with men of the greatest wisdom and fullest experience in those matters; and I do declare to you most solemnly and most truly, that on the result of all this reading, thinking, experience, and communication, I am not able to come to an immediate resolution in favour of a change of the groundwork of our constitution; and in particular that in the present state of the country, in the present state of our representation, in the present state of our rights and modes of electing, in the present state of the several prevalent interests, in the present state of the affairs and manners of this country, the addition of an hundred knights of the shire, and hurrying election on election, will be things advan-

tageous to liberty or good government."—In another part of this letter he adds—"Please God I will walk with caution, whenever I am not able clearly to see my way before me."

On the 8th May, he spoke still more decidedly against the question, on Alderman Sawbridge's annual motion for the same object—A periodical work of the time (Political Magazine), styled this "a most able, ingenious, and elaborate speech;" and the outline of it,* found among Mr. Burke's papers, even more than verifies this description; for in many points it is perhaps unanswerable. No man can be considered conversant with this important and much-talked of subject who has not read all that he has written upon it.

About this time, a few petitions to repeal the indulgences granted to the Catholics two years before, excited to action the Protestant associations under Lord George Gordon; a moody fanatic, whose talents were contemptible, and whose language in the House, often coarse and reprehensible, was sometimes almost treasonable though disregarded as the ravings of a half-madman. He had moved, without finding a seconder, that the petition presented by Mr. Burke the preceding session, from the Roman Catholic sufferers by the riots in Scotland, "be thrown over the table;" and now, to give further proofs of his zeal in the same cause, called together, "for the honour of God," the rabble of London. The consequences of this proceeding were the riots; one of the most disgraceful pages in our domestic history, when the powers of the members of govern-

* Burke's Works, vol. x. p. 72.

ment, seemingly sunk in hopeless apathy, waited to be roused by the spirit and good sense of the King, who, by taking the responsibility upon himself of ordering the military to act, restored the metropolis to the dominion of order and law.

In the exigency of the moment, when Mr. Fox, with inconsiderate and unjustifiable party feelings, refused to strengthen the hands of government, Mr. Burke, much to his honour, strongly recommended it; advising him and Opposition generally, to forget all their differences in unanimity and defensive associations. As a powerful advocate of the persecuted sect, the fanatical feeling ran strongly against him among some of the leaders; his residence in the broad sanctuary was more than once heard to be threatened, he was reviled as a Jesuit in disguise, nick-named Neddy St. Omer's, and caricatured as a monk stirring the fires of Smithfield, in addition to much more of similar vituperation. Trusting, however, to a considerable share of popularity, or believing that the bulk of the mob, being bent on plunder and riot, cared little for any thing else, he did not hesitate to mix with a party of them, and experienced no great personal ill-will. His own notice of the adventure, written soon after to Mr. Shackleton, is as follows:—

"My wife being safely lodged, I spent part of the next day in the street amidst this wild assembly, into whose hands I delivered myself, informing them who I was. Some of them were malignant and fanatical, but I think the far greater part of those whom I saw were rather dissolute and unruly than very ill-disposed. I even found friends and well-wishers among the blue-cockades."

An account which appeared in some of the newspapers of the day (London Chronicle and others), gives an anecdote which exhibits his personal fearlessness on the occasion.

"This day (June 6th) a detachment of footguards took possession of Westminster Hall, the doors of which they at last closed to prevent the mob entering there: several Members of both Houses, who walked down on foot, were thus prevented from getting into the House for a considerable time, among whom was Mr. Burke, who was presently surrounded by some of the most decent of the petitioners, who expostulated with him on his conduct, in abetting Sir George Savile's motion for the Roman Catholic bill.

"Mr. Burke in his defence said, he certainly had seconded the motion for the bill, and thought himself justified in so doing; he said he understood he was a marked man, on whom the petitioners meant to wreak their vengeance; and therefore he walked out singly amongst them, conscious of having done nothing that deserved their censure in the slightest degree, having always been an advocate for the people, and meaning to continue so. Mr. Burke at length got rid of his troublesome interrogators."

Few things do more credit to the active and perhaps sensitive humanity of this eminent man, than his zealous though unostentatious endeavours for the extension of the royal mercy to the chief part of the unhappy rioters who having been convicted of the crime, now awaited the awful retribution of the law. With this view he drew up some reflections on the approaching executions, and exerted his influence in

pressing letters to the Lord Chancellor, Lord Mansfield, the President of the Council, and the Secretary to the Treasury, to submit his opinions to his Majesty and Lord North. Public justice, he urged, ought to be satisfied with the smallest possible number of victims; that numerous executions, far from increasing, diminished the solemnity of the sacrifice; anticipating in this respect the general feeling of the present day, that if not absolutely characteristic of a sanguinary disposition, such scenes frequently repeated are certainly not useful. The letters and reflections appear in his Works.

For the original instigators of the tumults, among the higher classes, however, he had no such consideration, uttering against them in Parliament several bitter anathemas; they, he said, and not the ignorant and misled multitude, ought to be hanged; and when some of the leading "Associators" were seen in the lobby of the House, he exclaimed loudly in their hearing—"I am astonished that those men can have the audacity still to nose Parliament;" and had previously remarked that freedom of debate in the Commons of England had arrived at a new æra, when a bludgeoned mob in the street aimed to destroy that freedom, and soldiers with fixed bayonets were employed at the doors to protect it.

On the 20th of June, after calm had been restored, petitions were again presented against tolerating Popery, to which neither Ministers nor Opposition would give any countenance. Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke spoke for three hours each against reviving such an intolerant spirit; the latter, after expressing the warmest attachment to the Church of England,

avowed that he abominated any thing like intolerance, moving five resolutions to this effect, and in reprobation of the late excesses, which were with little opposition carried. He also thwarted popular prejudice on another point. A bill had passed the Commons to prevent Roman Catholics from being permitted to give scholastic instruction to Protestants, when, finding it likely to be productive of some injustice, he drew up a petition to the other House, which had so much effect with Lord Thurlow, that on the third reading he quitted the woolsack, and by one of his forcible assaults upon the principle of the measure, drove it out of the House without a division.

One of the persons who particularly solicited Mr. Burke's exertions on this occasion, was Mr. (or, as he was commonly termed, elocution) Walker, author of the Pronouncing Dictionary, and other works of merit, and who had given lessons in the art to young Burke. This gentleman had been educated a Presbyterian, but being much in the habit of discussing religious subjects in places where such topics never can be properly discussed, namely, in public religious debating societies, of which there was one at Coachmaker's-hall, a singular result followed; two or three persons were persuaded by his arguments to become Presbyterians, while he himself was argued into the propriety of turning Roman Catholic! The law in question aiming a deadly blow at his means of livelihood, he appealed forcibly to Mr. Burke one day in the vicinity of the House of Commons, who, conceiving he was serving the interests of literature, introduced him to a nobleman accidentally passing, with the following characteristic exordium:—"Here,

my Lord Berkeley, is Mr. Walker, whom not to know, by name at least, would argue want of knowledge of the harmonies, cadences, and proprieties of our language. Against this gentleman and against others who may be considered public benefactors, we are going, my Lord, upon a poor, ungrounded prejudice of the refuse of the mob of London, to commit an act of gross injustice: and for what? For crimes moral or political? No, my Lord, but because we differ in the meaning affixed to a single word (pronouncing it emphatically)—*transubstantiation*."

Having to present a petition to the House of Commons on the same subject some time before, in which he discovered some incorrectness of language or expression almost the moment it was to come forward, he nevertheless set about correcting it, though conscious it would be of little use; remarking, "if we are not favourably received, at least let us be worthy of it." While engaged in this way at the door, writing very fast, and, as he was often accustomed to do, conversing at the same moment with half a dozen persons round him interested in the prayer of the petition, the Speaker, Sir Fletcher Norton, called for him somewhat impatiently to proceed. "It is hard, Mr. Speaker," said he, with an arch expression of countenance, but without raising his eyes from the paper or ceasing to write, "it is hard you cannot wait even a moment—'No; not to stay the grinding of the axe,'"—a quotation from the fifth act of Hamlet, in allusion to the speed with which the Prince was to be put to death in England, and appropriately applied to the expected fate of the petition.

The humanity of Mr. Burke, exerted on another occasion, gave a fillip to the ingenious malice of the daily press. A man, it seems, had been sentenced to the pillory at St. Margaret's Hill, Southwark, for attempts at an atrocious offence, when the multitude stoned him so as to occasion immediate death; and for noticing this in the House of Commons with a remark on its cruelty as being so much more severe a sentence than the law awarded, a newspaper chose to indulge in some silly but most slanderous reflections, for which a rule for a criminal information was obtained against the editor, though, on apology, not pressed.* Five years afterwards, on repeating in his place the same remarks on a nearly similar occurrence in Bristol, the slander was reiterated, when finding it necessary to bring an action against the printer, the jury awarded him, there being no

* The detail of the occurrence in the newspapers exhibits a degree of barbarity that amply justified Mr. Burke's remarks. Two men, it seems, were punished at the same moment for the offence:—

"One of them being of short stature, and remarkably short-necked, could not reach the hole made for the admission of the head. The officers of justice nevertheless forced his head through the hole, and the poor wretch hung rather than walked as the pillory turned round. Previous to being put in he had deprecated the vengeance of the mob, and begged for that mercy which, from their exasperation at his crime, and their want of considering the consequences of their cruelty, they seemed very little to bestow.—He soon grew black in the face, and the blood issued from his nostrils, his eyes, and his ears; the mob nevertheless attacked him with great fury. The officers seeing his situation, opened the pillory, and the poor wretch fell down dead on the stand of the instrument. The other man was likewise so maimed and hurt by what was thrown at him, that he lay there without hope of recovery."

attempt at defence, 150*l.* damages. It is remarkable that shortly after this, his friend Lord Loughborough, himself a judge, had to appeal to a jury against the same unprincipled and abominable insinuations, which had no other foundation than the same party, or personal hostility as in the case of Mr. Burke; and he received the same damages.

In this year also another more extensive and important scheme of humanity occupied the ever active mind of the Member for Bristol; no less than the abolition, or material alleviation, of the horrors of the slave-trade; and a variety of thoughts on the subject, with a sketch of a new negrocode, were committed to paper. There were many reasons, however, against bringing forward such a measure then, and among these were: the incessant contests which American affairs occasioned in Parliament; the odium which such an innovation on the rights of trade and property would bring on Opposition from the West India interest; the policy of confining their strength to the more pressing grievance of the war; the impossibility of Opposition by itself succeeding in such a design under any circumstances whatever; the temper of the nation, which was not at all ripe for the discussion; and perhaps the unpopularity he had already incurred at Bristol, and which such a proposal would increase to exasperation. Time has shown that he judged rightly. Mr. Wilberforce, who took it up six years afterwards, has found it necessary to devote a whole life to the subject.

Mr. Burke's plan likewise embraced a minute regulation of the trade in all its stages, at a moment when very little hope could be entertained of its total

abolition; and had it been adopted, all the grosser horrors of the traffic would have been obviated. It is gratifying, however, to every lover of benevolence and talents, to find that many of his suggestions for the treatment of Slaves in the Islands are at length, after so long an interval, adopted. For the late regulations laid before Parliament, will be found nearly a transcript from the fourth section, or head, of his Negro Code, as may be seen in his works, vol. ix. p. 301—another instance of what has been remarked more than once, that his wisdom was almost always a long stage in advance of the age in which he lived.

To the exertions of Mr. Wilberforce he always gave the most zealous support, and his zeal was often eulogized in verse and prose; the following came from an old friend already introduced to the acquaintance of the reader, among the people called Quakers:—

THE NEGRO.

Addressed to Edmund Burke.

O Thou, this country's boast, this age's pride,
Freedom's firm friend, and Pity's gen'rous guide,
Great Burke! whose voice, when wretchedness complains,
Humanity's invaded rights maintains.
Hark! Nature speaks in injur'd Africk's right,
And deeds of horror are disclos'd to light:—
Thou wert not silent that important day,
On such a theme thou could'st not silent stay.
When such a voice arose in such debate,
And Truth roll'd onward with impetuous weight,
Who dar'd to vindicate the impious deed,
And with unblushing front for slav'ry plead?

The dissolution of Parliament in the beginning of autumn, necessarily carried him to Bristol, to

ascertain whether the rejection he had apprehended on account of disagreeing with his constituents on certain points of policy, was likely to take effect. To a meeting held at the Guildhall, on the 6th of September, he delivered his celebrated speech, the best ever uttered on such an occasion, and perhaps never excelled by any thing he spoke elsewhere. Were it always in the power of eloquence to conciliate, or argument to persuade, there were in this enough of both to redeem not only the crime of differing in opinion with his constituents, but more serious offences, had such been committed. Declining all apology for opposing the wishes, though he was satisfied, he said, not the interests, of those he represented, he entered on his defence. The charges against him were four;—in not visiting the City more frequently—in supporting Lord Beauchamp's Insolvent Debtor's Bills—the Irish Trade Acts—and the relief granted to the Roman Catholics. Each of these he defended with extraordinary ability; rendering even the common and temporary affair of an election, a medium for promulgating great and permanent political truths—such as the hustings never before supplied us with, and never since, except perhaps in the instance of another great man lately in his contests at Liverpool.

"Gentlemen," said he, in summing up, "I do not here stand before you accused of venality, or of neglect of duty. It is not said that in the long period of my service, I have, in a single instance, sacrificed the slightest of your interests to my ambition, or to my fortune. It is not alleged that to gratify any anger, or revenge of my own, or of my

party, I have had a share in wronging or oppressing any description of men, or any man in any description. No! the charges against me are all of one kind—that I have pushed the principles of general justice and benevolence too far; further than a cautious policy would warrant; and further than the opinions of many would go along with me.—In every accident that may happen through life, in pain, in sorrow, in depression, and distress—I will call to mind this accusation, and be comforted."

The main body of the Dissenters, of the Corporation, and much of the weight of property and respectability * in the city, were decidedly in his favour; the million indeed were of another opinion, and against numbers on such an occasion it was useless to contend. "Were I fond of a contest,"

* The following, among other resolutions, passed amid a large and most respectable body of the Corporation and Merchants:

"Bristol, Sept. 6, 1780.

"At a great and respectable meeting of the friends of Edmund Burke, Esq., held at the Guildhall, this day,

"The Right Worshipful the Mayor in the Chair;

"Resolved—That Mr. Burke, as a Representative for this city, has done all possible honour to himself as a senator and a man; and that we do heartily and honestly approve of his conduct as the result of an enlightened loyalty to his Sovereign, a warm and zealous love to his country, through its widely-extended empire; a jealous and watchful care of the liberties of his fellow subjects; an enlarged and liberal understanding of our commercial interest; a humane attention to the circumstances of even the lowest ranks of the community; and a truly wise, politic, and tolerant spirit in supporting the National Church with a reasonable indulgence to all who dissent from it; and we wish to express the most marked abhorrence of the base arts which have been employed, without regard to truth and reason, to misrepresent his eminent services to his country."

said he, "I have the means of a sharp one in my hands. But I have never been remarkable for a bold, active, and sanguine pursuit of advantages that are personal to myself."

The resolution to decline being immediately taken, and as readily declared in another speech, brief, but expressive, he thanked the electors for the favours they had already conferred, and honestly confessed his regret that they would not continue them; adding, that in sorrow, not in anger, he took his leave; in person as he deemed most proper, rather than by letter as was most customary; for as in the face of day he had accepted their trust, so in the face of day he accepted their dismission, conscious that he had nothing to be ashamed of. The appeal was very powerful, and the scene almost affecting, increased by the feelings of many of the auditory on the sudden death of one of the candidates, "showing us," said Mr. Burke, at the moment, no less truly than pathetically, "what shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue!" Bowing to the sheriffs, to the other candidates present, and to the assembled multitude, he quitted the hustings, and Bristol thus suffered itself to become a subject for reproach for ever.

If a popular election were always the exercise of sound discretion, the rejection of so great a man would be strange; but being, as it is, too often the result of tumultuous feeling and prejudice, the wonder ceases. Of all eminences, it has long been observed, that that which is raised on popular admiration is the most slippery and the most treacherous, continually falling from under the wisest and soundest statesmen, without the slightest de-

merit on their part. It may be termed the tight rope of politics, "a tremulous and dancing balance," on which none but the most dexterous political posturemaster can hope to maintain himself long; experience has amply proved that he cannot depend upon his footing a moment: for that line of conduct which the more enlightened know to be right, and he himself feels to be conscientious, is as often as not that for which he may be cried up by the multitude to-day, and pulled down to-morrow.

So was it with this distinguished statesman. He had merely exerted toward Ireland the same liberality of principle he had shown to America, and precisely on the same principle; and while the one constituted his greatest merit in the eyes of Bristol, the other, from the most selfish motives among the people of that place, became his most serious offence. The injury accruing to his own interests, on account of thus legislating in favour of the general interests of the kingdom on the one hand, and of oppressed individuals (small debtors * and Roman Catholics) on

* In allusion to the inquiries of Mr. Howard respecting that unhappy class, he drew the following admirable character of that celebrated philanthropist.

"I cannot name this gentleman without remarking that his labours and writings have done much to open the eyes and hearts of mankind. He has visited all Europe—not to survey the sumptuousness of palaces, or the stateliness of temples; not to make accurate measurements of the remains of ancient grandeur, nor to form a scale of the curiosity of modern arts; not to collect medals or collate manuscripts, but to dive into the depths of dungeons; to plunge into the infection of hospitals; to survey the mansions of sorrow and pain; to take the guage and dimensions of misery, depression, and contempt; to remember the forgotten, to attend to the neglected, to visit the forsaken, and to

the other, was considerable. The representation of Bristol, from its wealth, commerce, and population, was certainly an important object to Mr. Burke. Mr. Burke was in every respect a high honour to Bristol. A great man and a great city are made for each other, and none, but the most obvious and weighty reasons, should be permitted to separate them.

It was about this time, perhaps, that, hurt by the reception he had so undeservedly experienced, he gave vent to momentary irritation against the mercantile character:—"Do not talk to me of a merchant;—a merchant is the same in every part of the world—his gold his God, his invoice his country, his ledger his bible, his desk his altar, the Exchange his Church, and he has faith in none but his banker."

This conversational sally, however, was by no means his serious opinion. Commerce had been, from the first, as we have seen, his favourite study as a statesman; and in one of his early tracts there is a remarkable passage which the experience of our own day has amply verified, to the effect, "that agriculture would not attain any perfection until commercial principles were applied to it, or in other words, until country gentlemen were convinced that the expenditure of a small portion of capital upon

compare and collate the distresses of all men in all countries. His plan is original, and it is as full of genius as it is of humanity. It was a voyage of discovery; a circumnavigation of charity. Already the benefit of his labour is felt more or less in every country. I hope he will anticipate its final reward by seeing all its effects fully realized in his own."

land, was the true secret of securing a larger capital by insuring increased returns."

In adverting to the arguments of some of his own party, three years afterwards, on the India Bill, who urged that merchants were, from their habits, incapable of governing a country such as India, he dissented from such an opinion; liberally adding—"I have known merchants with the sentiments and the abilities of great statesmen; and I have seen persons in the rank of statesmen, with the conceptions and character of pedlars."

Malton, for which he was formerly chosen, again received, and, for the remainder of his political life, retained him as her representative; "and the humble borough," remarks a judicious historian,* "gained by such a member an honour which the greatest commercial city might reasonably envy."

It is thus that such places, not wholly under the influence of a popular spirit, make up in practical utility what they want in theoretical perfection; and one portion of the kingdom, even by its presumed faults, is enabled to repair the prejudice or injustice of another. Without this resource, he might not, at least for a time, have re-entered Parliament; he might have been disgusted, reasonably enough, with the popular cause; a sense of wounded pride might have carried him into retirement, to become merely a spectator of scenes in which nature and practice had so eminently fitted him to act and to adorn. His services, which in number and in value exceed perhaps those of any two hundred country gentle-

* John Adolphus, Esq.—History of England.

men who ever sat in Parliament put together, would have been lost to his country. Much also would have been lost, and this is no trivial loss, in national fame. Great men are a species of valuable public property, always the pride, often the chief stay and support of their country; the stars which enlighten and beautify her intellectual firmament, and by the numbers and radiance of whom her glory is raised and extended in the esteem of other nations. How many illustrious names might have been lost to the roll of English history, had it not been for the anomaly of close boroughs!

When he arrived at Bristol, previous to the election, a gentleman of that city, Mr. Noble, whom he particularly esteemed, tells an anecdote of the habitual disdain with which Mr. Burke treated what he called "loose libels," and that strain of vulgar abuse so long directed against him, even when its contradiction promised to be useful to his interests.

The rumours of his being a Roman Catholic, of being educated at St. Omer's, and others of the same stamp, had, it seems, reached Bristol after the riots in London, and being believed by many of the electors in a certain sphere of life, Mr. Noble*

* The testimony of this gentleman, who continues to be the delight of his friends, is too flattering to the writer of this work as far as regards his sources of information, and too expressive of his own veneration for the memory of his illustrious friend, to be suppressed here.—

"I have read your 'Life of Burke' with very great satisfaction and thorough conviction of its correctness: for the trifling circumstances therein related, which occurred at my house so many years since, are accurate even to the very words; and the relation of them in your Memoir flatters me much, from the

begged his sanction to write to Mr. Shackleton to receive from him, as his preceptor, a formal contradiction of them. The reply to this was a negative: "To people who can believe such stories," said he, "it will be in vain to offer explanations." His friend repeated the recommendation more pressingly: "If I cannot *live down* these contemptible calumnies, my dear friend, I shall never deign to contradict them in any other manner," was again the answer.

Some few years after, on a question which arose on the impeachment of Mr. Hastings, a passage to the same effect is contained in a letter written by him to a Member of the House of Commons:—"*It would be a feeble sensibility on my part, which at this time of day would make me impatient of those libels, which, by despising through so many years,* I have at length obtained the honour of being joined in commission with this Committee, and becoming an humble instrument in the hands of public justice."

"Loose libels," he remarked on a subsequent occasion,* "ought to be passed by in silence. By me they have been so always. I knew that as long as I remained in public, I should live down the calumnies of malice and the judgments of ignorance. If I happened to be now and then in the wrong, as who is not? like all other men I must bear the consequence of my faults and my mistakes."

consideration, that in after ages my children's children will feel proud that their forefather was honoured with the friendship of that great and good man.

"Believe me, dear Sir, your most humble Servant,

"JOHN NOBLE."

* Letter to a Noble Lord, p. 8, 8vo. edit.

Another anecdote of him, while at Bristol, is related by the same gentleman, regarding what his friend Fox probably thought one of his deficiencies. Passing an evening at Mr. Noble's house, his hostess in jest asked him to take a hand at cards, when he pleaded ignorance. "Come then, Mr. Burke," said she, playfully, "and I shall teach you," and he accepting the challenge in the same good humour, with a witty remark on the power of female temptation, they sat down to the children's game of *beggar my neighbour*. This turning out in his favour, he was so amused with the idea of conquering his instructress, as to rally her, with much effect, during the remainder of the evening.

An instance of his earnestness to serve unfriended merit, gave rise to an unusual scene, in which the characteristic affability of the first personage in the kingdom was displayed in a marked manner.

During Mr. Burke's stay at Mr. Noble's, a clergyman of high character, a friend of the latter, being resident in the house, he became so much pleased with his conversation and manners, that hearing he possessed only a poor curacy, he expressed his inclination, should it ever be in his power, to forward his interests. Some years afterwards, the living that he served, which was in the gift of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, becoming vacant, the clergyman applied to Mr. Noble to remind Mr. Burke of his promise. The latter replied, that being very little known to the illustrious personage in question, he could not expect much attention to be paid to his application; "but at any rate," said he to Mr. Noble, "let your friend write himself, and I will present the letter."

Mr. Burke accordingly had an audience at Carlton House, was received in the most gracious manner, and having presented his petition, it was acceded to in an instant in the handsomest manner. In the fulness of his heart, the orator, from the business of returning thanks, was betrayed into an animated discourse on the situation, interests, and duties of princes, till at length recollecting himself he abruptly ceased, with an apology for the liberty he had quite unintentionally taken. "No apology is necessary, my dear Mr. Burke," said his Royal Highness, graciously laying his hand upon his shoulder in the most condescending manner; "from your lessons we must all derive wisdom; and it is to be regretted that so few imitate your candour." "I cannot, however," said Mr. Burke, on repeating the circumstance to his friends, "forgive myself for the indecorum of which I think I was guilty; but the suavity of the gentleman made me forget my situation; —in addressing my Prince, I thought I was speaking to my son."

In the discussions at the India-House he sometimes took part, and in those of November this year respecting the appointment of a new governor to Madras, bore testimony to the talents and character of his old acquaintance Lord Macartney, who proved ultimately the successful candidate. On the 24th of this month, his son Richard, who had entered himself of the Middle Temple, in November, 1775, was called to the bar, and took chambers, intending to practise, which he continued for some years. Here more than one acquaintance of the writer of these pages had occasion to call upon him some time after-

wards; he was a young man of talents much above mediocrity, the pride and delight of his father, whom he occasionally assisted in researches connected with parliamentary duty, and is said to have written "The Yorkshire Question;" a reply to Major Cartwright's plan of reform; and several letters and tract in reference to the politics of the time.

In the session of 1780 and 1781, Mr. Burke took a leading part on the message announcing the rupture with Holland, Mr. Fox's motion respecting Sir Hugh Palliser's appointment to Greenwich Hospital, a proposal by Lord North, to make the India-Company pay a large sum for the renewal of their privileges, on the Budget, on the causes of the War in the Carnatic, on a Commission for examining the Public Accounts, on the Ordnance Estimates, on Mr. Hartley's Bill to restore peace with America, a motion by Mr. Fox for an inquiry into the conduct of the war, another by Mr. Minchin on the supposed neglect of 3000 British seamen, in Spanish prisons; followed by one by himself on the treatment of the people of St. Eustatius, by Sir George Rodney and General Vaughan, supported by all the Opposition; on the latter subjects, the humanity of his disposition was complimented as being only equalled by the brilliancy of his genius.

In February, the Reform bill, or at least that branch of it relating to the civil list, was again introduced, in accordance with the solicitations of a variety of political associations, whose thanks and compliments flowing from many parts of the kingdom, formed some counterpoise to the ill-humour he had experienced at Bristol. Four able speeches were

expended upon it in vain. Much of his illustration, and of his reasoning on the point were new; his reply is said to have surpassed every thing that could be conceived on a subject seemingly so exhausted; the encomiums on his labour, eloquence, and wit, even from the ministerial side, were unprecedented, and a common remark in the House was, "that he was the only man in the country whose powers were equal to the forming and accomplishing so systematic and able a plan of reform." Lord North, who was not the last to applaud, delayed for some days to give it a negative, though adjured by the mover to do so at once if he meant it, without giving further anxiety to him or to the House, and be, at least for one day in his life, "a decisive Minister." In support of the measure Mr. Pitt made his first speech in Parliament.

It was about this period that the kind feelings of Mr. Burke were appealed to by a young and friendless literary adventurer, subsequently an eminent poet, whose name on the present occasion it is unnecessary to mention, who, buoyed up with the praise his verses had received in the country, and the hope of bettering his fortune by them in London, had adventured on the journey thither, with scarcely a friend or even acquaintance who could be useful to him, and with no more than *three* pounds in his pocket. This trifle being soon expended, the deepest distress awaited him. Of all hopes from literature he was speedily disabused; there was no imposing name to recommend his little volume, and an attempt to bring it out himself only involved him more deeply in difficulties. The printer it appeared had deceived him,

and the press was at a stand, from the want of that potent stimulus to action which puts so much of the world in motion. Hearing, however, or knowing something of an opulent Peer, then in London, who had a summer residence in his native county, he proposed to dedicate to him his little volume, and the offer was accepted; but on requesting a very small sum of money to enable him to usher it into the world, received no answer to his application. His situation became now most painful; he was not merely in want, but in debt; he had applied to his friends in the country, but they could render him no assistance. His poverty had become obvious, he said, to the persons with whom he resided, and no further indulgence could be expected from them; he had given a bill for part of his debt, which, if not paid within the following week, he was threatened with a prison; he had not a friend in the world to whom he could apply; despair he added awaited him whichever way he turned.

In this extremity of destitution, Providence directed him to venture on an application to Mr. Burke. He had not the slightest knowledge of that gentleman, other than common fame bestowed;—no introduction but his own letter stating these circumstances —no recommendation but his distress; but, in the words he used in the letter, "*hearing that he was a good man, and presuming to think him a great one,*" he applied to him, and as it was proved, with a degree of success far beyond any possible expectations he could form. Mr. Burke, with scanty means himself, and unbribed by a dedication, did that which the opulent Peer declined to do with it; but this was not all; for he gave the young

poet his friendship, criticism, and advice, sent some part of his family round to their friends to collect subscriptions for his work, introduced him to some of the first men in the country, and very speedily became the means of pushing him on to fame and fortune.

As a critic also, Mr. Burke was frequently called upon by authors for his opinion and correction, whenever they could procure an introduction to him, and many indeed without this customary preliminary; and about this time another candidate for poetic fame, the Rev. Mr. Logan, a Scotch clergyman, sent a present of a pleasing volume of poems, which was answered by a complimentary note, and an invitation to breakfast in Charles-street.

Another anecdote of his humanity, occurring nearly at the same period, was lately related by an Irish gentleman of rank who professed to know the circumstances, by way of contrast to the eccentric but mistaken kindness of an Irish philanthropist of our own day to one of the same class of unhappy objects.

Walking home late one evening from the House of Commons, Mr. Burke was accosted by one of those unfortunate women who linger out a miserable existence in the streets, with solicitations of a description which perceiving were not likely to have effect, she changed her style of supplication, and begged pecuniary assistance in a very pathetic and seemingly sincere tone. In reply to his inquiries, she stated herself to have been lady's maid in a respectable family, but being seduced by her master's son, had at length been driven through gradations of misery to her present forlorn state;

she confessed to be wretched beyond description, looking forward to death as her only relief. The conclusion of the tale brought Mr. Burke to his own door; turning round with much solemnity of manner, he addressed her, " Young woman, you have told a pathetic story; whether true or not is best known to yourself; but tell me, have you a serious and settled wish to quit your present way of life, if you have the opportunity of so doing?" " Indeed, Sir, I would do any thing to quit it."—" Then come in," was the reply; " Here Mrs. Webster," said he to the housekeeper, who lived in the family for about 30 years, " here is a new recruit for the kitchen; take care of her for the night, and let her have every thing suitable to her condition, till we can inform Mrs. Burke of the matter."—She remained a short time under the eye of the family, was then provided with a place, and turned out afterwards a well-behaved woman.

His playfulness of manner was scarcely less conspicuous than his humanity and good nature, as the following incident which occurred about this time will testify:—

Two strolling players and their wives, who paid frequent visits to the neighbourhood of Penn and Beaconsfield, chiefly on account of the liberal patronage of Mr. Burke, had acquired some celebrity from performing, by means of rapid changes in dress and considerable powers of mimickry, *all* the characters in the pieces which they represented. On one of these occasions a fox-hunter was to be exhibited, to whom a pair of leather small-clothes was deemed an indispensable article of dress, but unfortunately there was no such article in their wardrobe. In this

dilemma, Mr. Burke, who was then at General Haviland's at Penn, and whose invention and assistance commonly contrived to overcome their difficulties, was applied to: for a moment he was at fault, but soon recollected that the identical garment formed part of his host's military costume. How to procure it, however, was the difficulty; to ask for it they knew would have appeared in the eyes of the owner a species of profanation: the old general was held fast in bed by the gout, the wardrobe stood close to the bed, and in this seemingly secure station was deposited the leathern indispensables. "Come, Dick," said Mr. Burke to his brother Richard, who equally enjoyed a jest of this kind, "we must out-general the general; you must be the decoy, and I shall be thief; attack the old soldier on his favourite military topic, lead him to the heights of Abraham, where his prowess was displayed with Wolfe, fight the battle and slay the slain once more; and in the mean time if my fingers be nimble and my luck good, I shall be enabled to march off with the breeches."—This jocular scheme was successfully accomplished, and subsequently afforded a frequent topic for merriment to the visitors at Penn.

On another occasion, a strolling party at Beaconsfield had called at Butler's-court, to know what play their patron would be pleased to order; one of Shakespeare's was mentioned, when Mr. Burke inquiring of the manager, whether from the strength of his company reasonable justice could be done to the characters, some difficulty was started about one of them, an official personage, called in the play the Recorder. Just at that moment Richard Burke,

then Recorder of Bristol, opened the door of the room, but observing a stranger in seeming conference with his brother, attempted to withdraw, when Edmund instantly and happily observed—" Here," said he to the Thespian hero, " is a gentleman who will suit you exactly:—Come hither, Dick, we want you; or in other words, Mr. Manager, to speak with due theatrical correctness—' Enter Mr. Recorder.' "

To these amusements he frequently treated all his servants for the benefit of the players, when their success in finding auditors had been indifferent; and by way of enhancing the treat, often sent them off in his carriage, and any other vehicles at hand, when he did not go himself. On one of these occasions the house being literally emptied of all the establishment, save Mrs. Burke, two noblemen unexpectedly arrived from London, for whom she had not only to make tea, but to become cook and footman, by boiling the water herself, and by carrying the tea equipage to the drawing-room,—offices in which her noble guests very good-humouredly volunteered to assist; until at length one of the under gardeners appearing, relieved the hostess from her embarrassment.

In June 1781, the appearance of some Persees, sent from India in a diplomatic capacity, excited considerable notice in London, and being specially recommended to Mr. Burke, he carried them to visit the chief objects of curiosity in the metropolis, and among other places the House of Commons, and the King's Levee. On the discussion of India affairs, partly connected with the mission of these persons,

he addressed the following extract of a letter to Mr. (Sir William) Jones—

"I do not know I can justify myself in the liberty I take with you; but confiding in your humanity and condescension, I beg if you have leisure for it, that you would be so kind as to breakfast with me, and assist me with your opinion and advice on the conduct of the Bengal bill. The natives of the East, to whose literature you have done so much justice, are particularly under your protection for their rights. I have the honour to be, with the highest esteem and regard, dear Sir, your most faithful and obedient humble servant, "EDM. BURKE."

A motion by Mr. Fox also in June, of this year, to repeal the Marriage Act, excited particular notice, on account of bringing forward Mr. Burke as its chief opponent, the two friends supporting their respective views with extraordinary ability. Those of the former were considered too general and too philosophical for a practical statesman, who knew so much of the world, while the latter seemed to keep his eye more on facts, on the truth of his general principles, and on their application to the condition of society in this country. It was rejected without a division; and, in fact, Mr. Fox took up the matter from a family feeling,—the aversion shown by the Duke of Richmond's family to his mother's marriage with his father. Some of the ideas thrown out by the Member for Malton are said to have furnished a few hints to Mr. Malthus in his work on population.

It is amusing sometimes to look back and trace the contradictory opinions entertained of statesmen,—the most vilified of all the animals in the creation—at different periods of their career militant, and the little credit they receive for the most honest opinions and conduct, when unwilling to go all lengths with the zealots of different parties. At this time the Tories considered Mr. Burke one of their most formidable adversaries, while some of the more violent Whigs thought him little better than half a Tory, verifying the line of Pope—

"While Tories call me Whig, and Whigs a Tory."

The former occasionally hinted that he treated rank, wealth, and connexion, with too little ceremony; the other that he was too aristocratical in his notions for a bold and decided Whig. "I admired, as every body did, the talents, but not the principles of Mr. Burke," says Bishop Watson, writing of this particular period, and his reasons for questioning the latter are rather remarkable as coming from a bishop —"His opposition to the clerical petition first excited my suspicion of his being a high Churchman in religion, and a Tory, perhaps an aristocratic Tory, in the state."

Alluding to these accusations in the speech on the Marriage Act just mentioned, he gives the substance of those doctrines, which, having more fully illustrated ten years afterwards, he was then charged with having broached for the first time;—doctrines which teach no more than the strict preservation of all the rights of all the orders, high and low, in the state; and which, whether known to us as Whig-

gism or Toryism, contains the main principles of sound patriotism.

" I am accused, I am told abroad, of being a man of aristocratic principles. If by aristocracy they mean the peers, I have no vulgar admiration, nor vulgar antipathy towards them; I hold their order in cold and decent respect. I hold them to be of an absolute necessity in the constitution; but I think they are only good when kept within their proper bounds. . . . .

" If by the aristocracy, which indeed comes nearer to the point, they mean an adherence to the rich and powerful against the poor and weak, this would, indeed, be a very extraordinary part. I have incurred the odium of gentlemen in this House, for not paying sufficient regard to men of ample property. When, indeed, the smallest rights of the poorest people in the kingdom are in question, I would set my face against any act of pride and power, countenanced by the highest that are in it; and if it should come to the last extremity, and to a contest of blood—my part is taken; I would take my fate with the poor, and low, and feeble.

" But if these people come to turn their liberty into a cloak for maliciousness, and to seek a privilege of exemption, not from power, but from the rules of morality and virtuous discipline, then I would join my hand to make them feel the force, which a few, united in a good cause, have over a multitude of the profligate and ferocious."

To a new and brilliant recruit to the banners of Opposition, already rich in one department—and that an envied department—of fame, and with whom

as a member of the Literary Club he had been for some time acquainted, he is said to have given some friendly though disregarded advice on his first efforts in Parliament which were made in the course of this session.

This was the witty and ingenious Mr. Sheridan, who, possessed of talents the most useful, and even splendid, only wanted industry to become equal to some of the greatest names of the age. Even as it was, indolent and dissipated, neglecting study and averse to business, his uncommon natural powers always placed him in the first rank. A good poet, he would not cultivate poetry; the first comic dramatist of the age, and almost in our language, he deserted the drama; a shrewd politician, he wanted that solidity of thought and conduct, which, after all, form the surest passports of public men to public favour; a powerful orator, he would not always cultivate that degree of knowledge which could alone render it effective and convincing in the assembly which he had to address. He was ready, shrewd, and remarkably cool in temper in debate, but like some advocates at the bar whose example few prudent men would desire to imitate, he seemed often to pick up his case from the statements of the opposite side. Power, fortune, and distinction, all the inducements which usually work on the minds of men, threw out their lures in vain to detach him from pleasure, to which alone he was a constant votary.

With all these deductions, his exertions in Parliament were frequent and vigorous, and often very powerful; his wit and ingenuity never failed to

amuse and interest, if they did not persuade; with greater preparation for Parliamentary discussion, few could have produced a stronger impression. His speech on the Begum charge, of more than five hours' continuance, and considered one of the finest orations ever delivered in Parliament, drew from Mr. Burke, Mr. Fox, and Mr. Pitt, compliments of a high and unusual order; and from the house generally, and the galleries,—members, peers, strangers of all sorts by common consent—vehement shouts of applause and the unusual tribute of clapping of hands. With such powers, who but must regret their inadequate exercise, and unhonoured close? For it is melancholy to remember that this admired man, the friend of the great, the pride of wits, the admiration of senates, the delight of theatres, the persevering champion of his party for so many years, should at length be permitted to terminate his career in humiliating distress; adding another to the many instances too familiar to us, of great talents destitute of the safeguards of correct principle or ordinary prudence.

Inferior to Mr. Burke, to whom, at one time he professed to look up as a guide, in some natural gifts, in moral strength of character, in extent of knowledge, in industry, and mental activity, and in what may be termed, the very highest order of political genius, there were in their history several points of resemblance. Natives of the same country, they sprang from that rank in life which is compelled to work its own way to wealth or eminence. From the study of the law in England, they were both weaned by the attractions of general

literature; and from this again, by the more animating bustle of politics; it was their fate to struggle the greater part of their lives in the uphill path of Opposition for a momentary enjoyment of power, which was no sooner obtained, than it was as suddenly snatched from their grasp. Ill success, however, did not shake their constancy; disinterestedness was in an eminent degree a merit of both. For amid unparalleled shiftings of principle and of party, by men who had not the apology of stinted or embarrassed fortunes to plead, they continued faithful to their leaders; a fidelity not less honourable than remarkable, for it was imitated by few. In addition to these coincidences, the similarity may be carried a point further. Though always foremost in the support of their party, they rose superior to party feelings when the public safety seemed endangered—Mr. Burke on occasion of the riots in 1780; Mr. Sheridan during the mutiny at the Nore. The French Revolution misled the latter, as it did many other able and ingenious, though perhaps not very profound or reflecting men; and, on this account, in the language of the former, they became "separated in politics for ever."

A resolution of Congress to recall General Burgoyne from his parole in England induced Mr. Burke, at the solicitation of the latter, to address a letter to Dr. Franklin, then American Ambassador at Paris, in August, 1781, requesting his influence to get the order rescinded. The philosopher was more than usually polite in reply. "Mr. Burke always stood high in my esteem; and his affectionate concern for his friend renders him still more amiable;" expressing

for him in another sentence what perhaps no other English statesman of any party enjoyed, "great and invariable respect and affection."

In support of the amendment to the address moved by Mr. Fox, November 27th, 1781, Mr. Burke uttered a bitter philippic against the principle as well as the conduct of the war. The figure of shearing the wolf, in allusion to the *right* of taxing America, which the minister still insisted on, made a very strong impression on the House; when after descanting on our repeated losses and defeats, he went on to expose the folly of claiming rights which could not be enforced—

"But he must say a few words on the subject of these *rights*, which had cost us so much, and which were likely to cost us our all. Good God! Mr. Speaker, are we yet to be told of the rights for which we went to war? Oh, excellent rights! Oh, valuable rights!—Valuable you should be, for we have paid dear at parting with you. Oh valuable rights! that have cost Britain thirteen provinces, four islands, a hundred thousand men, and more than seventy millions of money! Oh, wonderful rights! that have lost to Great Britain her empire on the ocean, her boasted, grand, and substantial superiority, which made the world bend before her! Oh, inestimable rights! that have taken from us our rank among nations, our importance abroad and our happiness at home; that have taken from us our trade, our manufactures, and our commerce; that have reduced us from the most flourishing empire in the world, to be one of the most compact, unenviable powers on the face of the globe! Oh, wonderful

rights! that are likely to take from us all that yet remains!

"What were these rights? Can any man describe them? Can any man give them a body and soul, a tangible substance, answerable to all these mighty costs? We did all this because we had a right to do it; that was exactly the fact—'And all this we dared to do because we dared.'

"We had a right to tax America, says the noble lord, and as we had a right, we must do it. We must risk every thing, forfeit every thing, think of no consequences, take no consideration into view but our right; consult no ability, nor measure our right with our power, but must have our right. Oh! miserable and infatuated ministers! miserable and undone country! not to know that right signifies nothing without might, that the claim without the power of enforcing it was nugatory and idle in the copyhold of rival states, or of immense bodies of people. Oh! says a silly man full of his prerogative of dominion over a few beasts of the field, there is excellent wool on the back of a wolf, and therefore he must be sheared. What! shear a wolf? Yes. But will he comply? have you considered the trouble? how will you get this wool? Oh! I have considered nothing, and I will consider nothing but my right: a wolf is an animal that has wool; all animals that have wool are to be shorn, and therefore I will shear the wolf. This was just the kind of reasoning urged by the Minister, and this the counsel he had given."

The omission in Lord Cornwallis's capitulation of any article to secure the American loyalists serving

in the British army from the vengeance of their countrymen, formed another topic of indignant reproach with Mr. Burke. Next day he returned to the charge with undiminished spirit; followed in a few days by two renewals of the motion respecting St. Eustatius; a general feeling existing that the people of that island had been unjustifiably treated, which the heavy damages afterwards awarded by juries against the commanders, naval and military, served to confirm.

Shortly afterward he presented a petition to the House, privately conveyed to him, written on the blank leaf of an octavo volume with black lead pencil (pen and ink being denied him), from Mr. Laurens, American Envoy to Holland, who, being captured on his passage, had been committed to the tower a year before; the seeming rigour of the case exciting all his sensibility, the cause of the prisoner was taken up with such warmth, that he was liberated on bail shortly afterward, and soon exchanged for General Burgoyne. On this occasion (Dec. 3d) an unusual degree of courtesy was shown him by the House; for not being in his place when the private business had concluded, and Mr. Fox saying he was sure his honourable friend had not departed from his intention, it was agreed to await his arrival rather than proceed to other business.

Several of the politicians of Ireland being in the habit of occasionally consulting him on the public measures adopted there, Lord Kenmare at this moment solicited his opinion on a bill then in progress for the alleged relief of the Roman Catholics, particularly in matters of education; to

which he replied in a letter * dated 21st of February, 1782, soon after published without his consent in the Irish metropolis. This piece, occupying 30 octavo pages, which has all his accustomed force and perspicuity, was written amid a multiplicity of business, public and private, allowing him so little leisure that it was said to be dictated sometimes while eating a family dinner, sometimes while dressing, or even engaged in familiar conversation.

In public he was occupied, after the recess, in supporting some motions of Mr. Fox against Lord Sandwich and the Admiralty Board; on the employment of General Arnold as "a rebel to rebels;" on the Ordnance Estimates; in an able reply to the new American Secretary (Mr. Welbore Ellis); on General Conway's motion, February 22d, for terminating the war with the colonies, which reduced the Ministerial majority to one; and on Lord John Cavendish's motion of censure on Ministers, March 8th.

In animadverting on the difficulty of proposing new taxes (March 6th) he observed with his accustomed felicity of satire, that on looking over the blessed fruits of Lord North's administration, he found the country loaded with ten new taxes—beer, wine, soap, leather, horses, coaches, post-chaises, post-horses, stamps, and servants;—recollecting that he had omitted sugar in this enumeration, he remarked that since St. Christopher's was lost, and Barbadoes and Jamaica must probably follow, the omission was of small importance, as we should soon have no sugar to tax.

* Burke's Works, vol. vi. p. 269.

" What fresh burdens can the Noble Lord add to this taxed and taxing nation? We are taxed in riding and in walking, in staying at home and in going abroad, in being masters or in being servants, in drinking wine or in drinking beer; in short, in every way possible.*"

" But viewing the account," he continued, " in a mercantile form, he must confess that for a hundred millions of money, we had purchased a full equivalent of disaster. If we were debtor by less in that sum of money, we were also creditor by less in a hundred thousand men, thirteen continental provinces, besides St. Vincent's, Grenada, Dominica, Tobago, St. Christopher's, Senegal, Pensacola, and Minorca, worth, at a moderate computation, four millions and a half annually."

When at length this long and arduous political struggle terminated (19th March, 1782), by the resignation of the Ministry, amid the triumphant shouts of Opposition, he afforded an example of moderation by checking the too clamorous joy of his friends, and reminding them how many difficulties they had to encounter; how necessary it was to guard against their own favourite desires, opinions, vanity, love of power, or emolument; how much the public expected from them; and how much they stood pledged to achieve; in which recommendation he was seconded by General Conway, another amiable and moderate man. —Recollecting the dictation which Mr. Fox often wished to assume in the deliberations of the party,

* This idea was dilated into an amusing article which appeared some time ago in a celebrated periodical work devoted to criticism.

it is difficult to believe that this lecture was not chiefly meant for him; from a misgiving in the mind of his coadjutor (so truly verified by the result) that his rashness, or impatience of superior lead or influence, would ultimately ruin the party.

A letter from Dr. Franklin, on the subject of the exchange of Mr. Laurens for General Burgoyne, drew from Mr. Burke the following characteristic letter, the morning of the first decisive expression of opinion by the House of Commons against the continuance of the American war:—

"DEAR SIR,

"Your most obliging letter demanded an early answer. It has not received the acknowledgment which was so justly due to it. But Providence has well supplied my deficiencies; and the delay of the answer has made it much more satisfactory than at the time of the receipt of your letter I dared to promise myself it could be.

"I congratulate you as the friend of America, I trust as not the enemy of England, I am sure as the friend of mankind, on the resolution of the House of Commons, carried by a majority of 19, at two o'clock this morning, in a very full House. It was the declaration of 234; I think it was the opinion of the whole. I trust it will lead to a speedy peace between the two branches of the English nation, perhaps to a general peace; and that our happiness may be an introduction to that of the world at large. I most sincerely congratulate you on the event.

"I wish I could say that I have accomplished

my commission. Difficulties remain. But, as Mr. Laurens is released from his confinement, and has recovered his health tolerably, he may wait, I hope, without a great deal of inconvenience, for the final adjustment of this troublesome business. He is an exceedingly agreeable and honourable man.* I am much obliged to you for the honour of his acquaintance. He speaks of you as I do; and is perfectly sensible of your warm and friendly interposition in his favour. I have the honour to be, with the highest possible esteem and regard, dear Sir,

" Your most faithful and
" Obedient humble servant,
" EDMUND BURKE.

" London, Charles Street,
Feb. 28th, 1782."

It may be remarked, as another proof of Mr. Burke's kindness of disposition, that he had, as he said, until very recently, no personal acquaintance with General Burgoyne. On the second debate (December 17th) the General said—

" Gratitude did not come up to the true magnitude of the feelings he experienced towards him (Mr. Burke), and he reverenced him the more because he knew the real source of his attachment to proceed

* This character is believed to have been just, being distinguished afterwards in his native country for uncommon disinterestedness and contempt for the common scrambling after place and power, too common even in republican America. He resided after the peace chiefly on his estate; and on his death, in 1792, desired his body to be burned to ashes in his garden by nine favourite Negroes, which was accordingly done.

principally from a generous concern for the unfortunate, and a disinterested feeling for the oppressed and persecuted. *He considered the friendship of the honourable gentleman as the greatest blessing, as well as the greatest honour, that had ever happened to him in his life.*"

About the same time, General Conway, on another subject, gave utterance to a nearly similar expression of sentiment, by saying "that he had an esteem for the honourable gentleman (Mr. Burke) perhaps superior to any he felt for any other man whatever."

CHAPTER VIII.

Appointed Paymaster General.—Reasons for not being in the Cabinet.—Letters to Lord Charlemont.—Lord Shelburne.—Coalition.—Reports of the Select Committee on Bengal.—Communication on the Arts to Barry.—India Bill.—Mr. Pitt.—Mr. Burke elected Lord Rector of the University of Glasgow.—Scotsmen.—Character of his Epitaph on Sir G. Saville.—Reception in the new Parliament.—General Haviland and family.—Jeu d'Esprit of Dean Marlay.—Letter to Miss Shackleton.—Anecdotes.

THUS had terminated the most hard and ably-fought party contest in our history, and with it virtually the war in which it originated; but it did not leave Mr. Burke, as it found him, undisputed leader of his party.

Mr. Fox, his political pupil and friend, who had been for some time treading closely on his heels in Parliament, and who had now advanced to an equality in the conduct of business there, and to superior popularity out of doors, finally took the lead. For this there were some obvious reasons. Inferior to his tutor, as a great and commanding orator, and what ought to be of more consequence to the country—as a wise and sound statesman, he frequently excelled most men in vigour of debate; but more especially possessed a peculiar tact beyond all his contemporaries and all his predecessors without exception, for being at the head of a political party. He enjoyed all the weight which birth and connexion (and these are essential objects among

the Whigs of England) could give: his acquaintance with the great was necessarily extensive, and his friendships nearly as general; with the young, by community of pursuits and pleasures, with the old and staid, by community of information and talent. His fortune originally was considerable, had it not been squandered, his temper in general easy, his thirst for popularity excessive, his manners adapted to gain it, and his sacrifices to ensure it; his very faults and weaknesses were with many more matter of jest and favour than of censure. Some of his doctrines were more to the taste of the people, who placed confidence in his sincerity; and with scarcely a shilling he could call his own, they were pleased to think him in spirit the most independent.

In all these points he had the advantage over his coadjutor, who also suffered some loss of weight by his rejection at Bristol, by his disregard of the popular voice when he thought it ill-directed, by a more uncompromising temper, by being supposed a dependant of Lord Rockingham, and, among a certain class, by being a native of Ireland. There was unquestionably a jealousy through life of the merits and influence of Mr. Burke, even among many who advocated the same cause, which nothing but very uncommon powers and exertions enabled him to surmount, and of which he frequently complained. Under all these disadvantages, however, he had kept the effective lead in the Commons for ten years; and, had Lord North fallen three years sooner, would have been made efficient Minister; the common opinion, early expressed at the table of Lord Rockingham, being, that "he was the only

man who could save the empire from dismemberment." Even just before that Minister's resignation, he himself remarks he had obtained a considerable share of public confidence, notwithstanding the jealousy and obloquy which had assailed him during much of his career. "I do not say I saved my country—I am sure I did my country much service. There were few indeed that did not at that time acknowledge it."

That Mr. Fox should now prevail, with Westminster at his back, with unbounded popularity in the nation, and the advantage of that aristocratic feeling in his favour, obviously inherent in the public mind on all public matters, forms no cause for surprise. Mr. Burke, who considered humility in the estimate of ourselves a species of moral duty, submitted to the sense of his party without a murmur. A vain man would have resented this; a weak one complained of it; an ambitious or selfish one probably taken advantage of it on the first opportunity to quit the connexion for ever, and throw the weight of his name and talents into the opposite scale.

In the division of the spoil of office, his share was a seat in the Privy Council, and the Paymaster-Generalship of the Forces, then the most lucrative office in the State, and remarkable for having been held by Lords Chatham, Holland, North, and Charles Townshend, previous to their becoming first Ministers. Considerable surprise was expressed at his not being included in the Cabinet; one reason assigned for which was his desire to purge the office in question of its acknowledged impurities, though the real one perhaps was the necessities of his party,

which required the Cabinet offices for men of greater family and Parliamentary interest, though of far inferior talents; and also it should be added, for the gratification of Lord Shelburne and his friends, who enjoyed a much larger share of the royal favour. It is also true that Mr. Burke drove no bargain on the subject for himself, expressing to his friends sentiments similar to those of a great statesman of the present day,*—namely, his willingness to serve his country, not where ambition might dictate, but where the general interests of government required. His moderation will be still more esteemed, when it is known that the chief arrangements for the new Administration were committed to his direction by the Marquis of Rockingham. To this he alluded three months afterwards on the discussions produced by the elevation of the Earl of Shelburne to the head of the Treasury.

After all it may be doubted whether this moderation, forbearance, disinterestedness, or by whatever other name it may be designated, was not misplaced. Those who affect humility in political consequence will commonly be taken at their word by their associates; and an attentive inquirer will find that Mr. Burke constantly made this mistake throughout his public life. The pride of the Whig Aristocracy indeed had scarcely begun, as it has been well said, to *thaw* during the most active part of his career, and he was therefore perhaps constrained to give way to the more potent influence of birth and family influence; but whiggism was, and no doubt deserved to be, injured by the arrangement:—on the

* Right Hon. George Canning—Speech at Liverpool, September, 1822.

present occasion he ought, beyond doubt, to have been in the Cabinet, and had he insisted upon it, a seat could not well have been refused. The omission certainly hurt his political reputation among many who could not know or appreciate the generosity of the sacrifice he had made; and even at the present day it is ignorantly urged as a kind of reproach, that though far superior in talents to any member of the Cabinet except Mr. Fox, he submitted to accept of an inferior office in administration.

Politics, however, unlike literature, is seldom a Republic. Party is Monarchy in miniature, where each must keep an appointed station for the benefit of all, and where other circumstances, such as great popularity, high rank, property, or weight in the country, independent of talents, must combine to constitute a chief suitable to the popular taste.

But were a man in this country, of great capacity and attainments, though of little influence or fortune, such for instance as Mr. Burke himself was, deliberately to choose his side in politics as he would a profession—that is, for the advantages it is likely to bring—he would probably not be a Whig. That numerous and powerful body is believed to be too tenacious of official consequence to part with it to talents alone—and too prone to consider high rank, leading influence, and great family connexion, rather than abilities of humbler birth, as of right entitled to the first offices of government. They are willing indeed to grant emolument, but not to grant power, to any other than lawyers, who do not materially interfere with their views on the chief departments of government;—an opinion which, notwithstanding the profession of popular principles, is

believed to have made them sometimes unpopular in the great market of public talent, and to have driven many useful allies into the ranks of the Tories.

His Majesty, on the change of administration, received his new servants unwillingly, nor is it great matter for surprise. It is hard for any man, and most of all perhaps for a king, to receive into his confidence and councils those who for nearly 20 years together have thwarted his most favourite views. So strong was the aversion in his mind to the Rockinghams, that Lord Shelburne, leader of another branch of Opposition, was offered the Treasury before it was offered to the Marquis, but feeling the want of sufficient weight and connexion in Parliament, he prudently declined it. Lord Rockingham, in consequence, insisted, before he accepted of office, upon certain stipulations, which were—to concede independence to America, to introduce a system of economy into all the departments of the State, and to carry some popular bills through Parliament.

The ministerial labours of the Paymaster-General were more considerable than those of any Member of the Cabinet. His Reform Bill, though much mutilated, passed both Houses, as he found, what most reformers in time discover, that it is easier to propose public correctives when out of office, than to carry them into effect when in. Many good reasons, indeed, were assigned for the alterations; and as the measure even then stood, no similar purgation of ministerial influence by one measure is known in our history, 36 offices eligible to be held by Members of Parliament being at once abolished. He also declared his readiness, whenever the sense

of the House would go with him, to adopt every part of the plan he had first proposed.

The bill to regulate his own office was deemed a species of feat in ingenuity, labour, and knowledge of business; the system being so complicated, and the abuses so ancient, that a universal feeling prevailed among preceding Paymasters, down to the lowest clerks in the establishment, of the hopelessness of the one being simplified, or the other amended. He nevertheless succeeded in his object chiefly by the assistance of Messrs. Powel and Bembridge, surrendering to the public the interest and other advantages accruing from the enormous sum of 1,000,000*l.*, which was not unfrequently the amount of the Paymaster's balance in hand. His disinterestedness did not stop there. As Treasurer of Chelsea Hospital he became entitled to the profits of clothing the pensioners, amounting to 700*l.* per annum, and, by a new agreement with the contractor, managed to save 600*l.* more; these sums, which as regular perquisites of office might have been enjoyed without impropriety or notice, he generously threw into the public treasury. It will scarcely be credited, that by this reform of the office, 47,000*l.* per annum were saved to the public, of which sum 25,300*l.* were the usual and avowed perquisites of the Paymaster, which all his predecessors constantly received. Considering his pecuniary circumstances, these were no ordinary sacrifices, and they gained from the country at large, and from Parliament, just as much credit as such things voluntarily given usually do—little notice and no recompense.

He agreed in the propriety of opening the negociation with Holland, in a variety of censures passed

by Mr. Dundas on the Government of India, and in conceding independence to the Irish Parliament, expressing in the following letter to Lord Charlemont some ingenious sentiments in his usual (especially in epistolary writing) elegance of manner:—

"My dear Lord,

"The slight mark of your Lordship's remembrance of an old friend, in the end of your Lordship's letter to Lord Rockingham, gave me very great satisfaction. It was always an object of my ambition to stand well with you. I ever esteemed and admired your public and private virtues, which have at length produced all the effects which virtue can produce on this side of the grave, in the universal love of your countrymen. I assure you, my Lord, that I take a sincere part in the general joy; and hope that mutual affection will do more for mutual help, and mutual advantage, between the two kingdoms than any ties of artificial connexion whatsoever. If I were not persuaded of this, my satisfaction at the late events would not be so complete as it is. For, born as I was in Ireland, and having received, what is equal to the origin of one's being, the improvement of it there, and therefore full of love, and I might say, of fond partiality for Ireland, I should think any benefit to her, which should be bought with the real disadvantage of this kingdom, or which might tend to loosen the ties of connexion between them, would be, even to our native country, a blessing of a very equivocal kind.

"But I am convinced, that no reluctant tie can be a strong one, and that a natural cheerful alliance will be a far securer link of connexion than any

principle of subordination borne with grudging and discontent. All these contrivances are for the happiness of those they concern; and if they do not effect this, they do nothing, or worse than nothing. Go on and prosper; improve the liberty you have obtained by your virtue, as a means of national prosperity, and internal as well as external union.

"I find that Ireland, among other marks of her just gratitude to Mr. Grattan (on which, your Lordship will present him my congratulations), intends to erect a monument to his honour, which is to be decorated with sculpture. It will be a pleasure to you to know, that, at this time, a young man of Ireland is here, who I really think, as far as my judgment goes, is fully equal to our best statuaries, both in taste and execution. If you employ him, you will encourage the rising arts in the decoration of the rising virtue of Ireland; and though the former, in the scale of things, is infinitely below the latter, there is a kind of relationship between them. I am sure there has ever been a close connexion between them in your mind. The young man's name who wishes to be employed is Hickey.* I have the honour to be, with the highest sentiments of regard and esteem, my dear Lord,

"Your Lordship's most obedient servant,

"EDMUND BURKE.

"Whitehall, June 12th, 1782."

* Another instance of Mr. Burke's kindness; he had already brought forward a poet and painter of celebrity, and now wished to do the same by a sculptor, but he died young. A good bust of Mr. Burke, by him, is in existence. It was the property of his relative, Thos. H. Burke, Esq., and has been presented by him lately to the British Museum.

When the news arrived of the great naval victory in the West-Indies, he declined to renew the inquiry against the commander-in-chief, respecting St. Eustatius, saying, that on public grounds he had brought it forward, and on public grounds, if the House thought proper, he would let it drop; and then, after a beautiful apostrophe to the laurel crown of the Romans, concluded by adding—"If there were a bald spot on the head of Rodney, he would willingly cover it with laurels."

By the persuasions of Mr. Fox, who had promised all his influence to the popular cause, and who afterwards took much credit to himself with the people of Westminster for the fact, Mr. Burke did not attend a discussion on Parliamentary Reform, which, in accordance with his known opinions, he must have opposed;—making a sacrifice in this instance, to the popularity of his friend's name, which he never made to his own.

Administration, on the whole, did much for popularity, and would probably have succeeded in their aim to acquire it, when the Marquis of Rockingham, who had been seized with a prevailing complaint of the time named influenza, unexpectedly died. Lord Shelburne, without any intimation to Mr. Fox, Mr. Burke, Lord John Townshend, or others of the party attached to the deceased nobleman, instantly vaulted from the Home Department into the vacancy; and they, unable or unwilling to act with him, immediately resigned.

This, which has been usually considered a hasty measure, certainly did not meet with general approval; but there is no foundation for an assertion made by some, who profess to have known some-

thing of the political secrets of the time, that it arose chiefly from the irritation of Mr. Burke. The suggestion, on the contrary, came from Mr. Fox, whose importance, from the situation which he held in administration, was more directly affected by that event; while it is undoubtedly true that both, while they disagreed with the new head of the Treasury on some public points, entertained a strong dislike to the private character of the man: and he in return is said to have felt quite as cordial an aversion to them.

The origin of this hostility, particularly between Mr. Burke and the new Premier, which was of long continuance, it is difficult to trace, but arose probably from some peculiar, perhaps unconstitutional, sentiments to which his Lordship had occasionally given utterance in the House of Peers, and some of which Mr. Burke quoted afterwards more than once in order to condemn—to alleged inconsistencies which had occurred when he was in office before—and perhaps to something which Mr. Burke might have heard of him from his friend Mr. Lauchlan Macleane, when the latter was his Lordship's Under Secretary in 1768.

That the feeling of the Noble Lord and his friends towards the late Paymaster was not less marked, was obvious on the 9th of July, when Mr. Fox having justified the line of conduct he himself had pursued, and being replied to by General Conway, who, with others of their friends, had *not* resigned, Mr. Burke rose to support Mr. Fox, and was met with violent confusion and noise at the bar. For a moment he felt some emotion, arising from delicacy, as he said, to one part of the House, and the most sovereign contempt towards the other; but

those who, by the present unaccountable tumult seemed dissatisfied with his conduct, knew where to find him.—Adverting to the Marquis of Rockingham, he said he was a man of clear head and pure heart, and his successor was directly the reverse —a man of all others the most unlike him;—adding, after a variety of strong animadversions, (rather a strange species of apology)—" that he meant no offence, but would speak the honest conviction of his mind:—If Lord Shelburne was not a Catiline or a Borgia in morals, it must not be ascribed to any thing but his understanding."

This nobleman, with very considerable talents, extensive information, and, perhaps, a better acquaintance with the foreign relations of the country than Mr. Fox, who filled that department, had, unfortunately for himself, acquired a character for political bad faith. He had been designated a Jesuit, and nick-named *Malagrida* for some years; and in other points report had long been busy with his character; he was accused of insincerity, of absolute duplicity, and even of want of common veracity toward his colleagues, to which, on the present occasion, some slighter circumstances gave countenance, though it is but justice to observe, the more serious charges were never proved. It is not a little remarkable likewise, that the unknown writer of Junius's Letters seems to have had a similar aversion to him, for in recommending portraits of the Ministry to the caricature pencil of Lord Townshend, (Miscellaneous Letters, No. 5, Sept. 16, 1767, Woodfall's edition) he gives loose to his licentious satire on Lord Shelburne, who was then Secretary of State

for the Southern Department, in the following strain:—

"There is still a young man, my Lord, who I think will make a capital figure in the piece. His features are too happily marked to be mistaken. A single line of his face will be sufficient to give us the heir apparent of Loyola and all the College. *A little more of the devil, my Lord, if you please about the eye-brows; that's enough; a perfect Malagrida I protest!* So much for his person; and, as for his mind, a blinking bull-dog placed near him will form a very natural type of all his good qualities."

By the friends of his Lordship the revolt of the Rockinghams was ascribed to petulance; to the disappointed ambition of Mr. Fox; to the desire of Mr. Burke to place the Duke of Portland at the head of the Treasury, and to consequent discontent at finding the Earl's influence in the highest quarter so much greater than their own. Of this superior influence, there had been already abundant proofs given them; particularly in his being offered the Treasury, as already stated, in preference to the Marquis; in securing almost unknown to that nobleman, the Order of the Garter for himself, a heavy pension for Colonel Barré, a peerage, a pension, and the unusual honour of a seat in the Cabinet as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, for Mr. Dunning, both his intimate friends and chief supporters in the House of Commons; besides an understood obligation on the part of Mr. Burke, at least for the present, to let the cutting-edge of his Reform Bill glance harmless over the Duchy in question, now placed under the guardianship of his friend.

The pension to Colonel Barré exciting animad-

version some time afterward in the Commons, his Lordship urged that it was the proposal of Lord Rockingham himself, in lieu of the Pay-office, which he wished to give to Mr. Burke; and that he had the letter in his pocket in which the offer was made. Mr. Burke and Lord John Townshend peremptorily denied any such arrangement in the strongest manner, called the story an utter fabrication, and dared him to produce the letter;—the letter never was produced. Mr. Fox, Mr. Courtenay, Mr. Lee, reiterated the charge of breach of veracity on other points. These circumstances account, in some measure, for Mr. Burke's increased aversion to the new Minister; for that he thought his own motives pure there is no doubt, as he could not, he said, give a stronger instance of sincerity, than, with a small fortune and large family, to sacrifice a lucrative office to public principle. And to the moment of the Usher of the Black Rod arriving to summon the House to hear the prorogation, he did not cease from strong animadversion.

On the re-assembling of Parliament, December 5th, 1782, he assailed the speech and its authors, on that and the following days, "in a vein of wit, argument, and satire, so finely blended, and so powerfully carried on," to use the words of the reported debates of the time, "that the House was kept in a burst of laughter the whole time;" and, at other times, particularly a few days afterward, varying his attack by invective or serious argument. On the former occasions, Mr. Pitt, the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, though personally complimented more than once, was nettled by the wit of Mr. Burke into some petulant and even angry remarks.

Lord Shelburne, who had in the recess signed

the preliminaries of peace, discovering his deficiency in Parliamentary strength, deputed Mr. Pitt toward the end of autumn, to wait personally on Mr. Fox in the last private interview these eminent men ever had with each other, in order to attempt a reconciliation. The latter, however, would not hear of his lordship remaining at the head of the Treasury. On the contrary, he preferred a junction with Lord North, who, by the numbers still attached to him in the House, held the balance between Ministry and Opposition; and who by throwing his weight into the latter scale, formed that celebrated coalition which, by the vote of the 21st of February condemning the peace, threw out the Ministry, and succeeded to their places. The Paymaster-General resumed his office; his brother Richard, from a practising barrister, became one of the secretaries to the Treasury, and, on the death of Lord Ashburton, Recorder of Bristol.

Part of the odium of forming this amalgam of parties fell upon Mr. Burke, though with little justice; for though he concurred in it as a matter of necessity, he neither interfered much with the arrangements, nor defended it with his accustomed vigour; and had, in fact, strongly objected to it, till overpowered by the persuasions of Mr. Fox, who was both eloquent and urgent with him on the occasion. In the debate of the 17th of February, 1783, on the preliminary articles of peace, in reply to Mr. Powys, who stigmatised the coalition, Mr. Burke said, there was nothing heterogeneous in such an alliance, if any such had been formed—which he had yet to learn; a sufficient intimation that he knew nothing of the first steps taken in it. If it be

true that Lord Shelburne himself had previously made overtures to Lord North for the same purpose, Opposition might consider it as only fighting the minister with his own weapons.

Mr. Eden, afterwards Lord Auckland, is known to have been the first proposer, and direct mediator, in forming the coalition. Lord John Townshend, always distinguished for the strictest principle and integrity, avowed himself with pride one of the authors of it; Lord Loughborough recommended it; Mr. Sheridan, though doubtful at first, ultimately approved it; Colonels North and Fitzpatrick conducted the negociation to a successful conclusion; Mr. Fox himself nobly said, that his friendships were eternal, his enmities only momentary; and after 40 years' experience and reflection, Lord Erskine* has found nothing in it to condemn. The true secret of the unpopularity of the coalition probably was the subsequent attempt to carry the India bill.

Whatever share, therefore, belongs to Mr. Burke, in the business of the coalition—and it certainly was not great—he acted under the unanimous feeling of the leading Members of his own party, and of all the Members of that with which they joined. He had, in fact, fewer reasons for avoiding it than Mr. Fox. Once or twice, indeed, he had threatened Lord North with impeachment; at other times, however, he paid many compliments to his personal integrity and amenity of manners, while the Minister, as if to evince the propriety of the latter compliment, often rendered justice to the splendid powers of his adversary, even in moments when most severely

* A few hours after this was written, the death of this distinguished lawyer was announced in the newspapers.

assailed by him; and in the earlier periods of his power, kind offices had not unfrequently passed between them. The dislike of Mr. Burke was political, pointing solely at the Minister; that of Mr. Fox was not only political, but personal to the man. He had said, that that Minister's blood ought to expiate his misdeeds—that he was the greatest criminal in the State—that he would be afraid to trust himself with him alone—and that, if he ever acted with him he would be content to be thought for ever infamous; intemperate and inconsiderate assertions which his own generous nature was the first to condemn. For using them, Lord North frankly forgave him; for recanting them, the public never did.

One of the first acts of the Paymaster-General, and for which he incurred considerable censure, was to restore Messrs. Powell and Bembridge, cashier and accountant of the office, who had been dismissed by Colonel Barré for alleged mal-practices. His benevolent feelings * in this instance mastered his prudence. The truth was, he did not believe them personally implicated in guilt from the unreserved disclosures they had made to him of the affairs of the office; he conceived it also a design on the part of Lord Shelburne and his friends, to lessen the popularity of Mr. Fox by throwing imputations on the memory of his father whose accounts formed the subject of dispute; and a still stronger reason

* It is also true, that the clerks of the office wrote to him stating their inability to get through the business of the department, unless those gentlemen were restored.

was, that by their assistance and theirs alone he had accomplished the reform of his office.

In a debate (March 27th) on Williams's Divorce bill, he again differed from Mr. Fox on a question, which, like that of the Marriage Act, might be termed the politics of morals. A clause had been introduced by Lord Ashburton in the upper House, bastardizing the issue of women convicted of adultery, born after separation from the husband. Mr. Fox opposed it strongly. Mr. Burke supported it, with what the reported accounts describe as "wonderful force;" giving his friend perhaps a hint on the score of morals, by sarcastically observing "that though no friend himself to divorces for insufficient causes, he remarked that most of the difficulties started upon them, came from bachelors, men, strangers to the nice feelings of husbands, and to the aggravating sensations which the injured honour of married men could alone feel."

He opposed on the 7th of May, in an excellent speech, Mr. Pitt's motion for Parliamentary Reform. The latter took an opportunity of retaliating upon him, on an accusation advanced against the Paymaster of altering and expunging clauses according to his own taste, in a bill connected with his office; and though the Speaker pointed out the misconception of the Member who made the charge, Mr. Pitt clung to it with some pertinacity as a handle for censure;—so little do statesmen in opposition differ, when the object is to criminate the more fortunate possessor of power.

It was at this period that he drew up the Ninth Report of the Select Committee of the House of

Commons for inquiring into the administration of justice in the provinces of Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa—a well digested, comprehensive, and instructive document, occupying 262 octavo pages, and dated 25th of June, 1783.

It embraces the state of the company as it then stood; the commerce of the whole of India, under the heads of internal and external; and the government exercised under the charter and under the different acts of parliament, considered in relation to the same heads of internal and external departments.

The conduct of Mr. Hastings on a variety of occasions, some of which were subsequently formed into charges against him, comes under animadversion; and the curious history is given of offering his resignation as Governor General, in 1776, through his agent, Mr. Macleane, whom he had expressly sent home for this among other purposes; and when he found this surrender was unexpectedly accepted, utterly disclaiming such resignation—the authority of his agent for giving it—his own hand writing containing his instructions to that effect—and even the testimony of two of his personal friends (Mr. Vansittart, and Mr. John Stewart) witnesses of the directions given to Mr. Macleane.

The Eleventh Report of the same Committee, drawn up in the same year, and relating chiefly to Mr. Hastings's alleged corrupt receipt of presents, is also the production of Mr. Burke. It is a shorter, though not less able, paper than the former, filling above eighty octavo pages, but rendered bulky, as originally published, by the number of appendices of official documents. Both pieces might have been

meant as precursors of the India Bill, in order to impress the public mind with the conviction of the necessity for a change.

So diversified were his powers, and so ready his means of throwing them out upon all subjects, that in the midst of these important investigations and serious contentions, he found time, as is pretty well ascertained, to address the following judicious and interesting though anonymous paper to Barry, containing free but friendly criticisms on his great pictures, then exhibiting in the rooms of the Society of Arts. The ability shown by the writer interested the painter so much, that he eagerly returned an answer, as directed, to the bar of the Cocoa Tree, in Pall-Mall, soliciting personal acquaintance or further correspondence with so competent a critic. No rejoinder was ever made, nor the actual author positively known, but adding to his acknowledged love for the arts, the regard shown for the individual to whom it was addressed, with the internal evidence of style and matter, the writer could be no other than his great patron. His reasons for not avowing himself were probably a desire to avoid unprofitable personal argument with an intractable spirit such as the painter was; or to prevent any increase of that unreasonable jealousy felt by the latter at his intimacy with Sir Joshua Reynolds, from whom he might think the observations addressed to him, came. Of this jealousy, Barry, who was in temper the Rousseau of painters, could not divest himself, thinking his patron's friendship for the great artist of the age a degree of neglect shown to his own fame and merits.

"To James Barry, Esq.

"professor of painting, royal academy.

"Sir,

"As you have submitted your works to public inspection before they are finished, in order to avail yourself of any observations which may be made upon them, I conclude that any individual who offers you his opinion generally, and in detail, and his reasons for entertaining that opinion, will not only do you a real service, but likewise act towards you with that kindness and civility which it becomes every member of the community to observe towards a man who has certainly laboured with very meritorious zeal and industry to serve it. This all must allow, whatever their opinion may be of your success, though I think there can hardly be two opinions concerning your work, considered generally, and with relation to its main design. It certainly surpasses any work which has been executed within these two centuries, and considering the difficulties with which the artist has had to struggle, any that is now extant.

"As I flatter myself that these difficulties are now at an end, I shall consider the work abstractedly from them, as a great effort of modern art, which, from its splendid and substantial merits, is likely to have a great influence upon the taste of the times, and in this light is of general importance, and demands the attention of every individual to contribute as much as he can, to render it perfect, as it is well known that trivial errors are of great consequence in great men and great works, for those imitators who cannot reach their merits will surpass

their faults. As you have explained your own principles, I shall, in the first place, make a few observations upon them, as being of more importance than the execution of your work; the faults in the latter affect only artists as great judges of art; but faults in the former affect the whole community when they come from persons of high reputation.

"Your distinction between abstract ideal character and beauty, and imitative, is undoubtedly just, but I think you carry it too far when you depreciate the one to raise the other. So far from setting them at variance, it behoves every friend to the art to endeavour to evince the necessity of uniting them. Without the power of combining and abstracting, the most accurate knowledge of forms and colours will produce only uninteresting trifles; but without an accurate knowledge of forms and colours, the most happy power of combining and abstracting will be absolutely useless; for there is no faculty of the mind which can bring its energy into effect, unless the memory be stored with ideas for it to work upon. These ideas are the materials of invention, which is only a power of combining and abstracting, and which without such materials would be in the same state as a painter without canvas, boards, or colours. Experience is the only means of acquiring ideas of any kind; and continual observation and study upon one class of objects, the only way of rendering them accurate.

"The painter who wishes to make his pictures (what fine pictures must be) nature elevated and improved, must, first of all, gain a perfect knowledge of nature as it is; before he endeavours, like Lysippus, to make men as they ought to be, he

must know how to render them as they are: he must acquire an accurate knowledge of all the parts of the body and countenance; to know anatomy will be of little use, unless physiology and physiognomy are joined with it, so that the artist may know what peculiar combinations and proportions of features constitute different characters, and what effect the passions and affections of the mind have upon these features. This is a science which all the theorists in the world cannot teach, and can only be acquired by observation, practice, and attention. It is not by copying antique statues, or by giving a loose to the imagination in what are called poetical compositions, that artists will be enabled to produce works of real merit, but by a laborious and accurate investigation of nature upon the principles observed by the Greeks; first, to make themselves thoroughly acquainted with the common forms of nature, and then, by selecting and combining, to form compositions according to their own elevated conceptions. This is the principle of true poetry, as well as of painting and sculpture. Homer and Shakspeare had probably never seen characters so strongly marked as those of Achilles and Lady Macbeth; at least, we may safely say, that few of their readers have, and yet we all feel that these characters are drawn from nature, and that if we have not seen exactly the same, we have seen models or miniatures of them. The limbs and features are those of common nature, but elevated and improved by the taste and skill of the artist. This taste may be the gift of nature, the result of organization; and the skill may be acquired by habit and study; but the ground works, the knowledge of limbs and features,

must be acquired by practical attention and accurate observation.

" And here, Sir, that portrait painting which you affect so much to despise, is the best school that an artist can study in, provided he studies it, as every man of genius will do, with a philosophic eye, not with a view merely to copy the face before him, but to learn the character of it, with a view to employ in more important works what is good of it, and to reject what is not. It was in this view that the great painters of the Roman and Bolognese schools collected such numbers of studies of heads from nature, which they afterwards embellished and introduced in their pictures, as occasion required. Hence that boundless variety which is observable in their works; the want of which is the only material fault of your great and masterly picture of the Olympic Victors.

" I do not mean to recommend to the historical painter to make his works an assemblage of caricatures, like those of Hogarth, and some of our present artists; but as there is scarcely any character so insipid that a Shakspeare or a Fielding would not have been able to discover something peculiar in, so there is scarcely any countenance so vacant but that there are some trifling features which may be of use to a skilful and ingenious artist; though it seldom or ever happens that any character of countenance is sufficiently strong and perfect to serve of itself for the hero of a poem or picture, until it has been touched and embellished by the fostering hand of the poet or painter.

" Portrait painting may be to the painter what the practical knowledge of the world is to the poet,

provided he considers it as a school by which he is to acquire the means of perfection in his art, and not as the object of that perfection.

" It was practical knowledge of the world which gave the poetry of Homer and Shakspeare that superiority which still exists over all other works of the same kind ; and it was a philosophic attention to the imitation of common nature (which portrait painting ought to be) that gave the Roman and Bolognese schools their superiority over the Florentine, which excelled so much in theoretic knowledge of the art.

" I was the more sorry to see any censures drop from you on this branch, because it will give little snarlers an opportunity of saying, that with a spirit of pedantry common to all arts and sciences, you censure what you cannot attain. I am one who think you can attain it, if you would turn your attention that way ; and I sincerely wish you would, because there is no doubt but that, if you possessed the imitative powers only in the degree which Mr. Gainsborough does, added to the poetical taste and genius which now animate your works, you would be the first artist that has appeared since the revival of arts. It was in the combination of these two powers that Annibal Caracci excelled ; you have indisputably surpassed him in one, and it will be your own fault if you do not rival him in the other.

" I entirely agree with you that the rage of the inhabitants of this country for having their phizes perpetuated, whether they are worthy of it or not, is one great obstacle to the advancement of art ; because it makes that branch more profitable than any other ; and therefore makes many men of great

talents consider it as the ultimate object of their art, instead of the means of that object.

" But there is another error on the contrary side not less fatal, which is the contempt our young artists are apt to entertain for the lower detail of nature, and the forward ambition which they all have of undertaking great things, before they can do little ones—of making compositions before they are acquainted sufficiently with the constituent parts. We are told that many ancient artists bestowed their whole lives upon a single composition. Such was Apollodorus who made the Laocoon, and Lysimachus who made the famous Hercules, destroyed by the Crusaders at Constantinople in the 13th century, together with many more of the sublimest productions of Grecian art and genius. We are not to suppose that these great artists employed so many years in chipping one block of marble, but that the greatest part of the time was employed in studying nature, particularly the vast and intricate branches of physiology and pathology, in order to enable them to execute perfectly the great works which they had conceived.

" These sciences are in a manner neglected by the moderns, but the author of the Laocoon was as deeply skilled in them as Haller or Gaubius, and hence he has been able to give that consistency of expression which prevails through the whole body, from the face through every muscle, to the ends of the toes and fingers. I was once told by a person who had spent many years in experiments and investigations of this kind, that every discovery he had made disclosed to him fresh beauties in the

wonderful group of Laocoon, and that to understand it thoroughly would require to know more of the human body than most of anatomists attempt to know. It is not enough to know the forms, positions, and proportions, of the constituent parts of the animal machine, but we should know the nice changes that are produced in them by the various affections of the mind, grief, agony, rage, &c. Without this we may produce splendid compositions and graceful figures, but we shall never approach that perfection to which the ancients arrived. A perfection, to which, I fear, the very constitution of modern society is an insurmountable obstacle. Such a minister as Pericles, might, perhaps, overcome it, but considering the present system of education, it is scarcely possible that such a one should appear. To distinguish between what is good and what is bad falls to the lot of many, but to distinguish between barely good and what is truly excellent falls to the lot of few, and it very rarely happens that any of these few are kings and ministers, who are able and willing to reward an artist for giving up his whole time to one object, which he must do, if he means to make it truly excellent.

" There is another erroneous principle which is extremely general in the present age, and is a principal cause of our faulty taste. This is the confounding greatness of size with greatness of manner, and imagining that extent of canvas, or weight of marble, can contribute towards making a picture or statue sublime. The only kind of sublimity which a painter or sculptor should aim at, is to express by certain proportions and positions of limbs and fea-

tures, that strength and dignity of mind, and vigour and activity of body, which enable men to conceive and execute great actions: provided the space in which these are represented, is large enough for the artist to distinguish them clearly to the eye of the spectator, at the distance from which he intends his work to be seen, it is large enough.

" A space which extends beyond the field of vision, only serves to distract and mislead the eye, and to divide the attention. The representation of gigantic and monstrous figures has nothing of sublimity either in poetry or painting, which entirely depend upon expression. When Claudian describes a giant taking a mountain on his shoulders, with a river running down his back, there is nothing sublime in it, for there is no great expression, but merely brute strength; but when Homer describes Achilles advancing to the walls of Troy, clad in celestial armour, like the autumnal star that brings fevers, plagues, and death; we see all the terrible qualities of that hero, rendered still more terrible by being contrasted with the venerable figure of Priam, standing upon the walls of Troy, and tearing his white hair at sight of the approaching danger. This is the true sublime—the other is all trick and quackery. Any madman can describe a giant striding from London to York, or a ghost stepping from mountain to mountain, but it requires genius, and genius experienced in the ways of men, to draw a finished character with all the excellencies and excesses, the virtues and infirmities of a great and exalted mind, so that by turns we admire the hero, and sympathise with the man—exult and triumph in

his valour and generosity, shudder at his rage, and pity his distress. This is the Achilles of Homer, a character every where to be seen in miniature, which the poet drew from nature, and then touched and embellished according to his own exalted ideas. Had he drawn him with great virtues and great abilities, without great passions, the character would have been unnatural, and, of course, uninteresting; for a vigorous mind is as necessarily accompanied with violent passions, as a great fire with great heat.

"The same principle which guided Homer should guide the painter in studying after nature. He should attempt to copy and not to create, and when his mind is sufficiently stored with materials, and his hand sufficiently exercised in art, then let him select and combine, and try to produce something superior to common nature, though copied from it. But let him not imagine, that because he can produce great things, he can therefore produce good things, or that when he has covered a great extent of canvas with bold and hasty sketches, he has produced a fine picture or sublime composition. Such works, compared with the beautiful and animated little compositions of the Bolognese school, put me in mind of Claudian's battle of the giants compared with Virgil's battle of the bees. In the former, all the objects are vast, but the action and expression extravagant and absurd, and the whole cold and uninteresting. In the latter, the objects are minute, but the action and expression bold and animated, and the whole together warm, clear, and spirited. I have seen a large cartoon copied from the little

picture of the Vision of Ezekiel, by Raffaele, in which the copyist thought, without doubt, to expand and illustrate the idea of the author; but by losing the majesty of the countenances, which makes the original so sublime, notwithstanding its being in miniature, his colossal copy became ridiculous instead of awful.

"It is with great concern that I have observed of late years this taste for false sublime gaining ground in England, particularly among artists. I attribute it in great measure to certain compositions, which have been extolled by interested prejudices, and admired by credulous ignorance, for no other reason than because they were not understood. Few readers take the trouble of judging for themselves, so that when a work is ushered into the world with great pomp, and under the sanction of great names, its real merits are examined only by a few, the generality being content to admire, because it is the fashion to admire. If the work under these circumstances be pompous and unmeaning, its success is sure, as its pomp dazzles, and its vacancy puzzles, both which are admirable ingredients to procure respect.

"This, I think, is the true way to account for the applause and admiration that have been given to those miserable rhapsodies published by Macpherson, under the name of Ossian. They were ushered into the world with great pomp, as the productions of an ancient bard, and recommended by the respectable authority of Dr. Blair, aided by all the national prejudice of the Scotch. Few, therefore, were willing to allow that they disliked them, and still

fewer bold enough to declare their dislike openly. Hence they have been received by many as standards of true taste and sublimity, which the author modestly declared them to be. The consequence of this was corrupting all true taste, and introducing gigantic and extravagant tinsel for easy dignity and natural sublimity. I attribute this false taste to these poems, because I see so many artists who have been working from them; all of whose works are tainted with it; and, indeed, it can hardly be otherwise, as the poems themselves (for so they are improperly called) are nothing but a confused compilation of tinsel and fustian, such as any one might write who had impudence enough to publish.

"Fashionable authors have great influence upon the taste of a nation; Seneca and Lucan certainly corrupted that of the Romans; and Homer as certainly formed that of the Greeks. Before his time, Sidon was the country of the arts, as he himself frequently mentions; but as soon as that spirit of true taste, elegance, and sublimity, which he had breathed into them began to operate, they infinitely surpassed all other nations. The shield of Achilles contains all the beauties of picturesque composition which have ever been imagined; and Phidias owned that whatever expression of majesty he had been able to give to his Jupiter, was owing to Homer.

"Why will not our modern artists continue to search this rich and inexhaustible mine, instead of copying the fantastic ideas of every *ignis fatuus* who catches the attention of the day. We have an excellent translation, or rather paraphrase, for those who cannot read him in his own language; and it

cannot be said that his subjects are hackneyed, as few of the moderns have worked after him, and the works of the ancients have mostly perished. I am persuaded that understanding Homer well, especially in his own tongue, would contribute more toward perfecting taste than all the metaphysical treatises upon the arts that ever have or can be written, because such treatises can only *tell* what true taste is, but Homer every where *shows* it. He shows that the true sublime is always easy and always natural; that it consists more in the manner than in the subject, and is to be found by a good poet or good painter in almost every part of nature.

"Could this truth be once established, I think a great obstacle to the advancement of the arts would be removed; but while a prejudice prevails that great works must be of great size, and that sublime compositions cannot exist but in great space, it is impossible such compositions should be often attempted; for the size of the rooms and the manner of furnishing them, necessary to make houses comfortable in a northern climate, exclude very large pictures. This prejudice is of modern growth, for the immoderate size of the pictures of Polygnotus at Delphi was never looked upon as worthy of imitation in the more polished ages of Greece, but only to be defended on account of the vast variety of poetical beauties introduced by the genius of the artist. The finest works of Apelles and Zeuxis were either single figures, or compositions which did not exceed three, or at most, five figures.

"Having extended these observations much farther than I at first intended, I shall defer en-

tering into a detail of your work until I know your sentiments of what I have already written, which if you think worth while, you will direct to R. J. L., at the Cocoa Tree, Pall Mall."

The recess of Parliament was devoted to the concoction of the celebrated India bill, of which Mr. Burke is said to have been a joint penman with the reputed author, though this has never been proved. It is certain indeed that he was the only one of the Ministry who knew much of the matter while in progress previous to its coming before the public, and it is also certain that it was submitted to his revision; he might likewise have been the author of the second or supplementary bill, ascertaining the powers of the new government, and securing the rights and interests of the natives; but all the great and leading principles were undoubtedly those of Mr. Fox.

A writer,* however, who must ever claim a great share of public attention, seems, by the following account, to be of a contrary opinion—

"It is to Mr. Burke that the first daring outline of the plan, as well as the chief materials for filling it up, are to be attributed—whilst to Sir Arthur Pigot's able hand was entrusted the legal task of drawing the bill. The intense interest which Burke took in the affairs of India had led him to lay in such stores of information on the subject, as naturally gave him the lead in all deliberations connected with it. His labours for the Select Committee, the ninth

* Moore's Life of Sheridan, p. 287—8, 4to. edit.

Report of which is pregnant with his mighty mind, may be considered as the source and foundation of this bill. * * *

"Burke was indeed at this time the actuating spirit of the party—as he must have been of any party to which he attached himself. Keeping, as he did, the double engines of his genius and his industry incessantly in play over the minds of his more indolent colleagues, with an intentness of purpose that nothing could divert, and an impetuosity of temper that nothing could resist, it is not wonderful that he should have gained such an entire mastery over their wills, or that the party who obeyed him should so long have exhibited the mark of his rash spirit imprinted upon their measures. The yielding temper of Mr. Fox, together with his unbounded admiration of Burke, led him easily, in the first instance, to acquiesce in the views of his friend, and then the ardour of his own nature, and the self-kindling power of his eloquence, threw an earnestness and fire into his public enforcement of those views, which made even himself forget that they were adopted from another, and impressed upon his hearers the conviction that they were all, and from the first, his own."

This statement, involving Burke as the actual, Fox the nominal, and Sir Arthur Pigot as legal father and guardian of the bill, had first appeared in a volume published four years ago, among other misstatements and prejudices directed against Mr. Burke; but the pen of the writer being then found as ponderous as his tongue had formerly proved to another auditory, the death of this production was nearly simultaneous with its birth. The story it

told, however, rests upon no sufficient foundation; no proof of the circumstance is adduced; and our credence is required merely to an assertion proceeding from the suspicious quarter of an avowed political enemy. Besides, the writer of the preceding passage, who, though of a very different stamp of intellect from the first propagator of the story, and uninfluenced by any thing like malice, will be suspected, perhaps, to be affected with similar political partialities, adds no matter of fact in corroboration of the anecdote. Mingled with that admiration of Burke, which every lover of genius, of talents, or of moral character must ever feel for him, a keen observer will probably discover in the latter part of the quotation I have given, a strained effort of ingenuity to prove that Mr. Fox *fancied* the measure was his own—that he acquiesced in *believing* he had suggested the plan—that his natural ardour *misled him* on this point—and that the *self-kindling* of his eloquence *forced* him to suppose that the materials used in the composition were collected and assorted by himself.

The origin of all this ingenious but cobweb theory, is the persevering endeavours used by the warm followers and friends of Mr. Fox, to throw off from his shoulders the burden of all the political mistakes he committed upon those of any one fitted to bear them; and Burke, as the moving spirit of the party, is usually singled out as this Atlas of error. No reflecting man, however, will be influenced by this partial distribution of what a staunch modern Whig may consider *political justice;* for in the nature of things it cannot be correct, except we sup-

pose that Mr. Fox had not, or did not exert, an understanding and a *will* of his own—points which those who attended to his general conduct or the usual tenacity of his opinions, will not for a moment believe.—That Burke assisted in the formation of the India bill; that he gave his opinion on parts of it; that he revised other parts; and that he consequently knew more of it while in its dormant state than most others of the ministry, are matters already admitted. But there is not a single fact on which to ground a belief of his being the original projector of the measure, or a probability of his proposing the more daring and arbitrary, and consequently obnoxious parts of it.

Examining likewise either his preceding or subsequent opinions, it will be readily admitted, that the prominent and innovating features of the plan bore little resemblance to the usual cautious legislation of one, who always entertained a strong distrust of great and sudden changes in modes of government, and was therefore little likely to propose the entire subversion of one; a sentiment which he particularly advanced during the debates. Neither is it probable, that he who was never accused of egotism on other questions, should on this become so laudatory on what, if the allegation were true, must have been so much indebted to his own hand. In addition to this, it may be observed, that in a debate in 1793, on the question of voluntary gifts to government and enrolments of volunteers, upon the propriety of which he differed in opinion with Mr. Fox, he said, in reply to some allusion to similar events about the end of the American war, that the mind of that gentleman was so much taken up at the period

in question with his India bill, that he could attend to nothing else. Such an assertion in the House of Commons, when they were no longer intimate, would scarcely have been hazarded, had he himself been equally concerned. It must also be remembered that the high eulogium he passed on the character of Fox in his great speech on the bill, was mostly in allusion to his being the *author* of it.

The motives indeed which dictated this important measure, however misrepresented at the time, ought no longer to be matter of doubt among intelligent men. It is the idlest of all things in a country like England, to talk of a preconcerted scheme to overawe the King, to annihilate the prerogative, to render the voice of the people nugatory, or to fix any ministry whatever perpetually in place; assertions which may serve a momentary purpose to render a body of political rivals unpopular, but are unworthy of the pen of history; and their best refutation is to be found in the circumstances that followed the attempt to carry this very bill. The administration of the government of India, in many points, could not well be worse conducted than it had been. Its proceedings for more than 20 years together had called forth constant animadversion in Parliament, and in the nation; and frequent inquiries and discussions there, as well as in Courts of Justice, had elicited facts so little creditable to our sway, as to become a source of reproach with foreigners upon our national fame and character for justice. Nothing could be more self-evident than the necessity for some reform, as the passing of Mr. Pitt's bill soon afterwards, and the additions made to it from time to time, proved.

The *mode* of reform now attempted was quite

another matter. It bore the stamp of a great, an energetic, an inventive, but an arbitrary mind. It imparted to the legislature a new power unknown to the constitution, that of appointing the Commissioners who were to exercise the functions of government over that vast Continent; it annihilated with little preface or apology the chartered rights of the India Company: took from it the management of its property by open force; offered no compromise; soothed no objections or prejudices; and attempted no conciliation; the principle itself, and the mode of carrying that principle into effect, were equally objectionable. It was distinguished by another striking and unprecedented peculiarity—for it had the effect of uniting the King and the people for the first time against a majority of the House of Commons.

Mr. Burke of course viewing the measure through a different medium, urged its success with all his powers. He reserved himself chiefly for the second reading, the 1st of December, 1783, when, in a crowded House prepared to hear something uncommon, he delivered one of those surprising orations, which, in vigour, in ingenuity, and in that forcible yet expansive grasp with which he usually fastens on a subject, seemed to leave the energies of other men far behind.

Disclaiming several questionable arguments urged by some Ministerial members, in its support, his reasoning turns principally on the necessity of the measure—the breach of the articles of its charter by the Company, and consequently, as in other agreements, the nullity of the compact—the enormous abuses of power by the Company's servants

—the utter inability for a series of years to correct these abuses, by remonstrance, or censure, or execration; by the voice of the nation, by the voice of Parliament, by the voice of the Directors of the Company themselves, by the voice of many of the highest servants of that Company on the spot where the abuses were committed. It was only from a conviction that the system was wholly incorrigible by less lenient means, that he, for one, would ever lend his hand to the subversion of that or any other established mode of government. The present bill, he said, would guard against future robberies and oppressions, and its highest honour and title would be that of securing the rice in his pot to every man in India.

"The most ignorant individual in the House," says a contemporary member, "who had attended to the mass of information which fell from the lips of Burke on that occasion, must have departed rich in knowledge of Hindostan. It seemed impossible to crowd greater variety of matter applicable to the subject into smaller compass; and those who differed most widely from him in opinion, did not render the less justice to his gigantic range of ideas, his lucid exposition of events, and the harmonic flow of his periods."

"The speech of Mr. Burke," in the words of another contemporary, "upon this grand turning point of the Administration, was perhaps the most beautiful, sublime, and finished composition that his studies and his labours had produced."

While his zeal and eloquence assisted to propel the bill through the Commons, he was seen along with Mr. Fox, standing on the steps of the throne

in the House of Lords, during the discussion there, anxious and agitated, striving by the influence of personal character and talents to do the same service in that assembly which he had done in the lower House. Other and superior influence, however, was also at work. The King, more alarmed for his authority than perhaps the occasion required, exerting his natural weight among the Peers, caused the bill to be thrown out, and immediately flung the Ministry after it, by a message to the Secretaries of State at one o'clock in the morning of the 19th of December to deliver up the seals of office: and thus this famous measure, upon which so much labour and talent had been expended, became the lever by which to prize its authors out of office.

Offensive, or unjust, or imprudent as the design may have been, it is not perhaps generally known that this plan for seizing upon India as a direct possession of the Crown was originally the suggestion of another and perhaps greater Minister, quite as bold, as ambitious, and as decided in character as Mr. Fox himself. This was no other than the great Lord Chatham. Mr. Burke said more than once, that to his personal knowledge his Lordship in 1766 and 1767, seriously contemplated the total dissolution of the territorial power of the East India Company as a *government* in India, and the assumption of it by the legislature of Great Britain, leaving to the Company only an exclusive, or nearly exclusive, right to the trade of that country. A similar design has been laid to the charge of the late Lord Melville in 1781; or at least that he *hinted* at the necessity of such a measure, from the inability of the Government at home to controul effectually the proceedings of the

local authorities in India. The fact however is by no means brought home to the latter. Yet were it true, it does not follow that his scheme, or that of Lord Chatham, would have contained the offensive clauses which created such alarm and aversion toward the bill of Mr. Fox.

The three months' struggle which ensued between Mr. Pitt, who accepted the Treasury, and the Opposition who constantly outvoted, censured, and threatened him with even weightier proofs of disapprobation, has little to do with the personal history of Mr. Burke, who exerted himself less on this than on any other great emergency of his political life. He probably felt the force of the difficulty so apparent at the very threshold of the discussion—that the King had an undoubted right to choose his own Minister, and against the Minister so chosen no specific offence could be alleged; the weight of the argument, therefore, was against the supporters of the party. It is also true that he always thought and always said that Mr. Pitt had worked himself into office unfairly, if not unconstitutionally.

Mr. Fox fought this unprecedented political battle with uncommon skill; and Mr. Pitt kept his ground with equal ingenuity, courage, and perseverance, backed indeed by the favour and exhortations of his Majesty, who had taken so strong an antipathy to the former gentleman, that sooner than again receive him as first minister, he had expressed a determination to quit England for Hanover. Perseverance rendered this singular resolution unnecessary, for the Opposition majority gradually dwinding from 54 to 1, Parliament was dissolved in March 1784; and the new elections running everywhere in favour

of Ministry, attended by every symptom of popular sympathy and satisfaction, no less than 160 of their opponents were thrown out, under the name of "*Fox's Martyrs.*"

Mr. Pitt, who accomplished this victory of the King's will over all the leading interests of the country, was one of those rare examples of men who, by the union of uncommon talents with peculiar good fortune, seem cut out by nature to influence or to govern kingdoms. He was a lucky man, however, before he became a great one; for his good fortune placed him in a station which, at his period of life, and little acquaintance with the public, he had no reason to expect; and his talents enabled him to maintain the important post which he had thus gained. It was an unprecedented occurrence in this, or perhaps any other European country, to see almost a boy placed at the head of public affairs; to see him snatch it from grey-headed experience and unquestioned fame; to retain it from youth to manhood, and from manhood to the borders of age, with no diminution of royal or popular favour, rendering the State, in more than one sense, a species of patrimonial inheritance.

In looking back to the first few, and of course more inexperienced years of his administration, it is impossible not to admire the skill, the mingled prudence and moderation, with which it was even then conducted. He had to provide a government for India, to revive trade, to arrange for the payment of the public debt, to regulate and increase the revenue, and to restore many other national interests nearly ruined by the American war. He had to face in Parliament a combination of by far the

ablest men this country ever saw; sometimes indeed in vehement contention, sometimes anticipating, sometimes bending to their suggestions, but commonly holding the even tenor of his way so wisely, that they had few substantial opportunities for finding fault. To uphold him, indeed, he enjoyed in an unusual degree the patronage of the people and the King; yet without such a firm hold upon either, on the ground of established reputation or of previous services, as to be certain of its continuance, without the exertion on his own part of great political dexterity. Taken as it were upon trial, he had his character to acquire. His father's name, indeed, was a tower of strength upon which he securely reckoned, and doubtless it proved the first and readiest passport to public esteem.

To both King and people it was obviously necessary for him, by the nature of the ground on which he stood, to pay assiduous court, and he did this without any seeming art or effort, oscillating to one side or the other as circumstances required; in favour with both, yet subservient to neither, though exposed occasionally to the accusation of insincerity. If to the popular side he gave his vote, to the other he was charged with lending his secret influence—a charge certainly unjust; yet, even if true, the former might be an assertion of principle, the latter possibly an unavoidable sacrifice to expediency, which every Minister, and almost every man, must occasionally make in his connexion with office or with the world. Up to the period of the French Revolution he had an arduous part to play in Parliament, and he played it well; after that event, by the imprudence of the Opposition in their admiration of the pro-

ceedings in that country, he gained an accession of strength which fixed him more firmly in his seat than ever. His manners were somewhat distant, with neither the amenity of Fox nor the frankness of Burke. His moral character stood high; his prudence—the better part of talents perhaps as well as of courage—was felt; his personal disinterestedness experienced and acknowledged; his rectitude of intention universally believed. Altogether, the estimation in which he was held as a public and private man, carried him through even the disasters of the French war with little decrease of popularity.

His eloquence was that of business—precise, logical, singularly fluent, with a command and choice of the very best words, hitched into the very best places, which the most gifted men rarely possess, and to which a tall figure, and fine toned voice, gave irresistible effect. It was deficient, however, in variety, in splendour, in felicity of illustration, in what may be termed those flashes of genius, which not only throw light on an intricate and difficult point, but sometimes succeed in cutting the knot of a sophism, which cannot be clearly unravelled; it dealt little in classical quotation or allusion, though he was an excellent classic; it did not seem so much the emanation of a vast and comprehensive, as of a bounded but admirably regulated intellect, and which probably caused Burke once to call him "the sublime of mediocrity." There is in it little of passion, and few of those overwhelming bursts which surprise us frequently in Burke, and sometimes in Fox; in all these respects he was perhaps inferior to both, particularly to the former, and more especially in wit and sarcasm (though his sarcasms were frequent

and bitter), and in vigour and fertility of imagination. He adheres indeed closer to the point than either, but on the whole warms and interests us less, possibly from the position he held compelling him to stand so much upon the defensive. At the same time there was in his speeches a simplicity and seeming integrity of manner that won confidence to what he said; and, besides being more brief than those of his great rivals, he possessed the still greater merit in the eyes of a cautious politician—that of never committing himself too decidedly; of not saying too much or too little on doubtful points; of being able at any time, as some one remarked, to deliver "a King's Speech off-hand." Few had more power over the House of Commons, where his speeches told with great effect. But although of a quite different character from those of his father, they are likely to share the same fate as literary compositions—that is, never to be consulted a second time for any extraordinary originality of thought, exhibitions of genius, or the very highest attributes of eloquence.

In the new Parliament, which met in May, 1784, the chief effort of the late Paymaster was in moving (June 14th) a representation to the King on the late dissolution; "a paper," said Mr. Fox, some years afterwards, "which would make the fame of some men, but which in the number and excellence of Mr. Burke's productions was, perhaps, scarcely remembered.

On the 16th of June, on Alderman Sawbridge's motion for a committee to inquire into the state of the representation, which was supported by Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan, the Earl of Surrey, and others of his

own friends, in addition to Mr. Pitt, Mr. Burke opposed it in a very powerful speech, followed by Mr. Dundas, Lord North, Mr. W. W. Grenville, and Lord Mulgrave—exhibiting, by this question, a complete disjunction of the usual party opinions.

In discussing Mr. Pitt's India bill, he predicted several of its inefficiencies in a manner which a very competent judge of the matter,* in a passing tribute to his memory as one of the wisest men and greatest orators of our country, says has been realized to the letter.

He was not viewed, however, with much favour by many of the new Members of the House. In common with Mr. Fox, he had incurred considerable odium, but, unlike him, had taken no pains to work it off. His habits being more retired, he did not now, or at any time sufficiently court intercourse and familiarity with one class of society, or the bustle and noisy freedom, the shaking of hands, and hoisting upon shoulders of another; the latter, in fact, were not much to his taste. So strong was the prejudice, or, as it was considered, combination chiefly of the younger Members, against him in the House, that the moment of his rising became a signal for coughing, or other symptoms of pointed dislike, by men who had no chance of success in contending against him in any other manner.† The speech introducing the representation to the King was not replied to, and towards its conclusion was

* Sir John Malcolm—Political History of India.

† The present Lord Rolle is said to have led this new band of orators, for which the *Rolliad* inflicted upon him exemplary punishment.

received with affected laughter. On three India questions of minor moment, whether owing to the unpopularity of himself, or of the subject, he was almost overpowered by continued and violent vociferation. And on another of these occasions, instead of threatening, like a distinguished modern leader * of Opposition not long ago when similarly assailed, "to speak for three hours longer," he stopped short in his argument to remark, that "he could teach a pack of hounds to yelp with more melody and equal comprehension."

At another time, having occasion to rise with papers in his hand, a rough-hewn country-gentleman, who had more ear perhaps for this *melody of the hounds* than for political discussion, exclaimed with something of a look of despair, "I hope the Honourable Gentleman does not mean to read that large bundle of papers, and bore us with a long speech into the bargain." Mr. Burke was so swoln, or rather so nearly suffocated with rage, that, utterly incapable of utterance, he ran out of the House. "Never before," said the facetious George Selwyn, who told the story with great effect, "did I see the fable realized—a lion put to flight by the braying of an ass."

Muzzling the lion was in fact the colloquial term used at the time for these attempts to prevent him from speaking; and as several of Mr. Pitt's younger friends were among the principal actors concerned, the Minister was accused of promoting it. It is certain that he then thought him his most formidable opponent, chiefly on account of the variety of his

* Right Honourable George Tierney

powers, which made it difficult to give him, what Mr. Fox's more straight-forward mode of attack commonly received, a complete answer, and not unfrequently it ruffled his (Mr. Pitt's) temper. The same reason, that of "muzzling the lion" towards himself, has been assigned for the Minister allowing the inquiry into the conduct of Mr. Hastings to go on, after having in the first instance decidedly put his face against it.

An able anonymous writer* of that day expresses his surprise at the indecorous interruptions "given to a man possessed of an eloquence with which all that remains of antiquity must lose in the competition;" but the truth was, they had been so frequent towards other popular men, that on a motion by Sir George Saville, a session or two before, the curious spectacle was exhibited of the Speaker (Mr. Cornwall) severely reprimanding a large body of Members in a long speech, as "a set of gentlemen who spent most of their time elsewhere, and did not deem it necessary to attend to any part of the debate, in order that they might decide with decency, or vote with conviction."

In the month of April, when, on account of being so lately ejected from office and from public favour, an act of respect to him became additionally kind, the University of Glasgow elected Mr. Burke its Lord Rector, and re-elected him in the following November. His installation drew a large concourse of spectators, including all distinguished for rank or eminence in the surrounding country, anxious to see a man of whom they had heard so much; several

* Believed to be Dr. Tower, then writing in the New Annual Register.

of the literati, among whom was professor Dugald Stewart, accompanied him from Edinburgh. An elegant speech expressed his thanks for the honour done him, his regard for the learning and talent assembled within the walls in which they were, and his esteem for the national character, by which he confessed he had been favourably impressed. "They are a people," said he, in a conversation with Mr. Windham, "acute and proud, of infinite pretension, and no inconsiderable performance; and, notwithstanding their offensive egotism and nationality, which it seems a point of conscience to push down every body's throat, on the whole very estimable."

On another occasion being asked his opinion of a Scotsman of some consideration who had been recently introduced to him; "A very good kind of man," was the reply, "only, like all the rest of them, (alluding to their nationality) *he stinks of Scotticism.*" At another time he observed to Wilkes, "You never heard a Scotchman in your life converse for twenty minutes together, that he did not lug in Scotland by the head and shoulders, if there were no better means of introducing her. Every thing in their country is in their eyes of importance to all the rest of the world, though in itself trivial or inferior to what you find elsewhere;—wretched hovels are transformed into the remains of feudal grandeur; rocks, heaths, and rugged mountains, into picturesque scenery; highland vagabonds, who lived by plundering their more peaceable neighbours, are gravely introduced to us as bold and warlike chieftians; sorry pamphletteers (provided only they be Scotch) are represented as men of talents; rural

traditions, such as all countries produce, become Poems of Ossian; and when learning is in question, Edinburgh and Glasgow, in their opinions, quite extinguish the glories of Oxford and Cambridge, but these are excusable foibles." On a subsequent occasion (1785) he took a tour to the Highlands, and expressed much satisfaction from the journey; deriving, as he confessed, not only increase of pleasure, but of health, from the change of scene.

Shortly before this, he had lost, by death, his friend Sir George Saville, one of the most amiable men of his time, between whom and Mr. Burke a close intimacy commenced about the time of the entry of the latter into Parliament, and which continued without interruption until dissolved by that which dissolves all human connexions. Sir George was a man of the most upright intentions, warm heart, and of very considerable talents. To the latter it is no disparagement to say, that in their parliamentary exertion he was frequently believed to be obliged to Mr. Burke for suggesting, shaping, and revising some of the measures he introduced into the House; obligations indeed incurred in common with every other member of the party. To his virtues and merit Mr. Burke paid the following animated tribute in his speech at Bristol in 1783, alluding to the act of 1778 for relieving the Roman Catholics.

"The mover of the bill was Sir George Saville. When an act of great and signal humanity was to be done, and done with all the weight and authority that belonged to it, the world could cast its eyes upon none but him. I hope that few things which have a tendency to bless or to adorn life, have wholly

escaped my observation in my passage through it. I have sought the acquaintance of that gentleman, and have seen him in all situations. He is a true genius: with an understanding vigorous, and acute, and refined, and distinguishing even to excess; and illuminated with a most unbounded, peculiar, and original cast of imagination. With these he possesses many external and instrumental advantages; and he makes use of them all. His fortune is amongst the largest; a fortune which, wholly unincumbered as it is with one single charge from luxury, vanity, or excess, sinks under the benevolence of its dispenser.

"This private benevolence, expanding itself into patriotism, renders his whole being the estate of the public, in which he has not reserved a *peculium* for himself of profit, diversion, or relaxation. During the session, the first in, and the last out of the House of Commons; he passes from the senate to the camp; and seldom seeing the seat of his ancestors, he is always in the senate to serve his country, or in the field to defend it. But in all well-wrought compositions, some particulars stand out more eminently than the rest; and the things which will carry his name to posterity, are his two bills; I mean that for a limitation of the claims of the crown upon landed estates; and this for the relief of the Roman Catholics. By the former he has emancipated property; by the latter he has quieted conscience; and by both, he has taught that grand lesson to government and subject—no longer to regard each other as adverse parties.

"Such was the mover of the act that is com-

plained of by men who are not quite so good as he is; an act most assuredly not brought in by him from any partiality to the sect which is the object of it. For, among his faults, I really cannot help reckoning a greater degree of prejudice against that people than becomes so wise a man. I know that he inclines to a sort of disgust, mixed with a considerable degree of asperity, to the system; and he has few, or rather no habits with any of its professors. What he has done was on quite other motives. The motives were these, which he declared in his excellent speech on his motion for the bill;—namely, his extreme zeal to the Protestant religion, which he thought utterly disgraced by the act of 1699; and his rooted hatred to all kind of oppression, under any colour, or upon any pretence whatsoever."

To this worthy man and upright senator a very handsome statue is erected in York Cathedral. He is represented leaning on a pillar, holding in his hand a scroll, on which is written, "The Petition of the Freeholders of the County of York;" meaning the petition for parliamentary reform, on which question however he and his eloquent friend wholly differed. On the front of the pedestal, which is six feet high, the height of the monument being altogether sixteen, is the following inscription, said to be written by Mr. Burke:—

To the Memory of
SIR GEORGE SAVILLE, BART.
Who,
In five successive Parliaments,
Represented the County of York;
The Public Love and Esteem of his
Fellow Citizens

Have decreed this
Monument.
His Life was an Ornament and Blessing
To the Age in which he lived;
And, after his death, his
Memory
Will continue to be beneficial to mankind,
By holding forth an example of
Pure and unaffected Virtue,
Most worthy of Imitation,
To the latest Posterity.
He departed this life January the 9th,
1784,
In the 58th year of his age,
Beloved and lamented.
In private life he was Benevolent and
Sincere;
His Charities were extensive and secret;
His whole heart was formed on principles
Of Generosity, Mildness, Justice, and universal Candour.
In public, the patron of every national
Improvement;
In the Senate, uncorrupt;
In his commerce with the world disinterested.
By genius entitled in the means of
Doing good;
He was unwearied in doing it.

In the autumn, his house at Beaconsfield was entered in the night, and robbed of a quantity of plate and other articles of value; in allusion to the conveyance which it appeared brought the thieves from London to effect it, and carried them and their booty back, he used familarly to term it the *curricle* robbery. Not long afterwards he found time to draw up for a distant relation, Mr. E. P. Burke, the outline of a course of "Lectures on Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce," intended to be filled up and delivered

by that gentleman at Merchant Taylor's Hall, Bristol; they are said to have borne the stamp of his characteristic genius, knowledge, and comprehensive acquaintance with commercial principles and history.

About the same time death withdrew from the world his old acquaintance Dr. Johnson, from whom, in the vicissitudes of 27 years, no estrangement occurred to interrupt their mutual admiration and regard. Visiting him in his last illness, with some other friends, Mr. Burke remarked, that the presence of strangers might be oppressive to him. "No, Sir," said the dying moralist, "it is not so; and I must be in a wretched state indeed, when *your* company would not be a delight to me." He followed him to the grave as a mourner; and in contemplating his character, applied to it a fine passage from Cicero, which might equally suit his own—*Intentum enim animum quasi arcum habebat, nec languescens succumbebat senectuti.* — When some one censured Johnson's general rudeness in society, he replied with equal consideration and truth, "It is well, when a man comes to die, if he has nothing worse to accuse himself of than some harshness in conversation." He often remarked that Johnson was greater in discourse than even in writing, and that Boswell's Life was the best record of his powers; in 1790, he became one of the committee formed to erect a statue to his memory.

Shortly before this he had lost by death another highly esteemed friend, to whom allusion has been already made, General Haviland; who residing at Penn, in the neighbourhood of Beaconsfield, a close intimacy had commenced between the families, which,

cemented by the subsequent union of the son of the General with the niece of Mr. Burke, continued with the utmost cordiality through life. The General, who had spent nearly all his days in the army, was a high spirited and most honourable old soldier, a companion of Wolfe in America, and who became personally known to, and highly esteemed by, his late Majesty, through some anecdotes told of his romantic generosity; one of which may be mentioned.

Having applied twice or thrice ineffectually for a commission for his own son, a vacancy at length occurred in his own regiment, the 45th, to which it was considered he had the right of nomination; the family congratulated him on the opportunity which thus presented of accomplishing his wishes without further trouble, when, to their surprise he said he had altered his determination;—the boy could not have it. "There is," said he, "young ———, who is more in want of it than he is; his father gave me a commission when he might otherwise have disposed of it, and being now dead, and his family unprovided for, it is but right I should repay to the son what I owe to the father.—My boy must wait;"—and the commission was given accordingly.

Mr. Burke used to say that he knew few men not professedly devoted to study, who possessed more ingenuity and information than the General. He had likewise a great genius for mechanics; could even repair, and it is said, make, watches; a pocket compass very correct and neatly executed by him, has been seen by the writer; in short, nearly all the wood and iron work in his house was done by himself, having a forge and bellows for the purpose, and

when this source of amusement was exhausted, he was accustomed to apply to the neighbouring cottagers for work. An antiquarian friend relates to the writer, that there were few pottage-pots, skillets, or saucepans in the vicinity of his house, which had not at one time or another furnished evidence of the General's skill;—and relates the following anecdote:—

"John Tilbury, now living, and at the age of 90 still vigorous enough to take a leading part in singing the psalms at Penn Church, and who at that time frequently joined the church choir with his bassoon, had the mishap to break some of the brass work of his instrument—and as a matter of course carried it to the General to repair. When finished, Tilbury drew out his canvas bag of money with a flourish, and put the question—"Well General, what am I in your debt for the job?" "My price," replied the veteran with good humour, "is, should it be again broken, to let me have the pleasure of again repairing it."

He had a great antipathy to an untruth, and rarely or never forgave any person who had once sinned in this respect towards him. Of this the young officers under his command were so well aware, as some of them now living say, that when they wished for leave of absence, and assigned some fictitious reason to him to obtain it, they continued in the greatest dread lest the real motive, which was commonly a pleasurable excursion, should be discovered.*

* The following notice of this veteran appeared in the newspapers at the period of his death, September, 1784, believed to be from the pen of Burke:

Mrs. Salisbury Haviland, his lady, well-known among many of the wits of the time for possessing

" Died at Penn, in Buckinghamshire, in the 67th year of his age, General William Haviland, Colonel of the 45th regiment. He was an officer distinguished for his long and able services, having spent his whole life in the army; for his father being an officer, he was born while the regiment was on duty in Ireland. He himself acted as Lieutenant under Lord Cathcart at the memorable siege of Carthagena; and afterwards with Vernon at the conquest of Porto Bello. He then served as Aid-du-Camp under General Blakeney during the rebellion in Scotland. In the subsequent war, from the beginning of hostilities he served in America, where he had a separate command, and by his exertions and success received the particular acknowledgments of Lord Amherst, who has ever since honoured him with his friendship.

" A singular genius for mechanics enabled him to concert measures for passing the Rapids; and the fertility of his resources in other unusual circumstances, made him very efficient (under his distinguished commander) in contributing to the success of the English arms in America. In the same war he acted as second in command at the conqust of Martinique, and in a very high one at the Havannah; so that having had the good fortune through life to be placed in the most conspicuous scenes of action on chosen services, and with the most eminent men, he acted in such a manner as even among them to attain a high reputation for courage and ability.

" When the last war broke out he was put on the staff, and after being a very short time at Whitehaven, he was entrusted with the command of the western division of the island during the whole time the French invasion was expected, and there continued till the end of the war. The station was important and the service delicate; there he had the happiness to preserve perfect harmony between the regular forces and militia; while by the prudent disposition of his troops and an exact discipline he performed the more substantial functions, he maintained the dignity of his situation by a style of life which became the service of his Sovereign.

" His house was open to the navy as well as to the army; and the force of personal character, which was cordial, plain, informed, and unaffected, did much to facilitate the national service

an original and vigorous mind, was much admired by Mr. Burke, who when in town, frequently corresponded with her on the topics of the day. She had a taste for poetry, and wrote verses with ease and spirit. Her sisters, Mrs. Balfour and Miss Aston, who lived with her after the death of her husband, were likewise superior women; and the former, who possessed a lively disposition, is said to have given Garrick the first idea of the character of the *Irish Widow,* in his farce of that name, by a trick played off in a familiar party upon the simplicity of Goldsmith. This lady it seems, for a piece of amusement, personated such a character—just arrived from Ireland, full of brogue and blunders—with wit, rant, and impudence—a little gentility nevertheless—and, added to all, assuming to be an authoress, soliciting subscriptions for her poems. Some of these she read with an affected enthusiasm, which created the greatest amusement among those who were in the secret. Goldsmith—the great Goldsmith as she called him, her countryman and of course, friend, she flattered extravagantly, and re-

in a country little inured to the burthen of arms, and when so many principal gentlemen were drawn away from their occupations and amusements. The same disposition followed him through life. To his own regiment he was a kind father, and to the younger officers of it his house was literally a home. The consequence however is, that in a long course of service, overlooking many opportunities of emolument but none of benevolence, though he always maintained a just economy, he has left his family in very narrow circumstances; for the sole reward of his services was a marching regiment on the Irish establishment, which was bestowed upon him very late in life, and with a constitution harassed and broken, not less from the variety than from the length of his services."

peatedly appealed to him on the merit of the pieces, which he praised with all due warmth in her presence—offered his subscription—and as strongly abused the verses (as well perhaps he might) when she retired. This scene, it is said, offered a finished specimen of acting.

Among their other acquaintance was Dean Marlay, frequently mentioned by Boswell for his sprightly and sociable qualities, who having passed a very agreeable day in the society of these ladies, sent them the following jeu d'esprit:—

HUMBLY INSCRIBED TO TWO CELEBRATED COQUETS.

An Answer to Mrs. Haviland, who asked, or ought to have asked, "What is Coquetry?"

Haviland.—What's Coquetry? *His Reverence.*—April weather,
Not the same two hours together;
Like a weather-cock still turning,
Now 'tis freezing, now 'tis burning;
Now 'tis tender, now 'tis rude,
Now 'tis formal like a prude;
Youthful, beautiful, and blooming,
Whilst submissive, still presuming;
Every winning art expert in,
Lovely, lively, and uncertain;
Flatt'ring promises still making,
Promises each moment breaking;
Sweetly trifling, gaily prating,
Love in every breast creating;
'Tis a dear bewitching sprite,
Made of beauty, wit, and spite;
Form'd to deceive and to subdue,
And look like——false Balfour and you.

During the summer, Mr. Burke received a visit from his old friend Mr. Shackleton and his daughter,

an ingenious lady, already introduced to the reader under the name of Leadbeater, who, charmed with the situation of his park and its vicinity, wrote a short poem descriptive of the scenery, the mansion, and a faithful sketch of its owner, of which the following forms the introduction.

All hail, ye woods, in deepest gloom array'd!
Admit a stranger through your rev'rend shade,
With timid step to seek the fair retreat,
Where Virtue and where Genius fix their seat:
In vain retiring from the public gaze,
Not deepest shades can veil so bright a blaze.
Lo! there the mansion stands in princely pride;
The beauteous wings extend on either side;
Unsocial pomp flies from the cheerful gate,
Where hospitality delights to wait;
A brighter grace her candid smile bestows
Than the majestic pillars comely rows.
Enter these ever-open doors, and find
All that can strike the eye, or charm the mind:
Painting and sculpture there their pride display,
And splendid chambers deck'd in rich array.
But these are not the honours of the dome
Where Burke resides, and strangers find a home;
To whose glad hearth the social virtues move,
Paternal fondness, and connubial love,
Benevolence unwearied, friendship true,
And wit unforced, and converse ever new,
And manners, where the polish'd court we trace,
Combined with artless nature's noble grace.

* * * * *

When the sad voice of indigence he hears,
And pain and sickness, eloquent in tears—
Forsakes the festive board with pitying eyes,
Mingles the healing draught,* and sickness flies;

* There was in this (as indeed in every other part of the character) something more than mere poetical compliment of the fair authoress.

Or, if the mind be torn with deep distress,
Seeks, with kind care, the grievance to redress.
This, this is Edmund Burke—and this his creed—
This is sublime and beautiful indeed.

To this compliment he wrote the following letter in reply:—

"MY DEAR MISS SHACKLETON,

"I ought not to have suffered myself to remain so long at a disadvantage in your mind. My fault is considerable, but not quite so great as it appears; for your letter went round by way of Carlisle, and it was a good while before it came to my hands. It ought, indeed, to have been my care to have made the earliest possible acknowledgment, where nothing more was required; and in a case where, indeed, there was little more in my power to do than to tell you in a few plain and sincere words, how extremely sensible I was of the honour you have done me, by making this family and this place the subject of some of the most beautiful and most original verses that have for many years been made upon any place or any persons.

"They make us all a little more fond of ourselves, and of our situation. For my own part I will not complain, that when you have drawn a beautiful landscape, you have put an old friend of your father's as a figure in the foreground; nor shall I pretend that I am not pleased even with the excess of partiality, which has made him an object worthy of appearing in such a scene. The scene itself, fine as it is, owes much to the imagination and skill of the painter; but the figure owes all to it. You great

artists never draw what is before you, but improve it up to the standard of perfection in your own minds. In this description, I know nothing of myself; but what is better, and may be of more use, I know what a good judge thinks I ought to be.

"As to your picture of this part of the country, I cannot help observing, that there is not the least of common-place in it. One cannot apply it equally to every country, as most things of this kind may be turned. It is particular and appropriated; and that, without being minute or tedious in the detail. Indeed, it is a sweet poem; and shows a mind full of observation, and retentive of images in the highest degree. Some of the lines are not quite so finished as to match the rest; and some time or other, I may take the liberty of pointing them out to you; and some of the rhymes hitch upon words, to which nothing (not even you) can give grace. But these are lesser blemishes; and easily effaced either by omission or a trivial change. You will excuse this freedom. But in so fine a poem, in which your kindness for an old friend of your father has given me so great an interest, you will naturally expect that I should wish for the perfection which I know you can give *your* work with a little more of *your* care.

"Pray excuse this very late and very imperfect acknowledgment of the great favour you have done me. I cannot plead business in favour of my delay. I have had a great deal of leisure time. At the moment I write this, I never was more busy in my life; and, indeed, thus much is in favour of activity and occupation, that the more one has to do the

more one is capable of doing, even beyond our direct task. I am ever, with Mrs. Burke's, my brother's, and my son's most affectionate regards to you, and to all Ballitore, which we love with great sincerity, my dear Miss Shackleton,

" Your most faithful and most obliged
" And obedient humble servant,
" EDMUND BURKE.

" Beaconsfield, Dec. 13th, 1784."

His benevolence, as the preceding poetic compliment implies, was frequently shewn in administering medicine, of which he knew a little of the practical part, to his poorer neighbours in the country, when they were unable to pay for more regular advice, or too distant to procure it immediately; and also to his servants and family. On one of these occasions in mixing some medicines for Mrs. Burke, he used a wrong one by mistake, and when he found it was likely to be productive of serious consequences, experienced indescribable agony for a few hours until assured there was no farther danger. In allusion to this unpleasant occurrence, he sometimes afterwards used to say to Doctor Brocklesby, " I mean to leave off practice, Doctor, for I fear I am little better than a quack."

To beggars he was kind and charitable, showing more compassion to the itinerant class than is generally exhibited, and which his education in Ireland, where from there being no poor laws, more consideration is displayed to such objects than in this country, tended to strengthen. All the silver which he carried out, in going for a walk, was usually

disposed of in this way before he came home, so that if a hackney-coach brought him to the door, he was scarcely ever able to discharge it without procuring the means from some one in the house. He would not admit that persons refused to assist travelling mendicants from policy. "No, Sir," said he, in a conversation on the subject, "it is only an apology for saving their money."

Some years after this time, when enfeebled by infirmity and by grief for the loss of his son, he was walking in the neighbourhood of Beaconsfield, with two ladies, near relatives, a beggar-man rather advanced in years accosted them, requesting assistance. Mr. Burke, after a few questions, gave him a shilling. "I wonder, my dear Sir," remarked one of the ladies, as they walked on, "you should bestow upon those people, who are generally worthless characters, so much; what you have just now given will be spent in *gin*." "Madam," replied he emphatically, after a pause, and assuming a severe aspect, "he is an old man;—and if *gin* be his comfort, let him have *gin*."

CHAPTER IX.

Speech on the Nabob of Arcot's debts.—Report of the Shipwreck of his son.—Impeachment of Mr. Hastings.—Peroration on opening the Charges.—Visit to Ireland by Mr. Burke.—Conversations with a Gentleman in London.—Letters to Lord Charlemont.—Mr. Hardy's account of him.—Preface to Bellendenus.—Epitaph on the Marquis of Rockingham.

In the Session commencing 25th January, 1785, no notice being taken of India affairs in the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Burke moved an amendment, warmly supported by Mr. Fox, and observed in allusion to the Governor General, that "there was at this moment in India as great a phenomenon as ever the world had produced. A person who stood not as a delinquent, but as a criminal in the eye of that House—whose criminal charge was on the records of their journals, and whose recal had been ordered by that House; nevertheless, in defiance of their authority, that criminal was at this moment commanding our armies, and directing the expenditure of our revenues in Bengal."

He likewise took part on the subject of the Westminster scrutiny, in which the Minister was accused of showing as much unworthy resentment towards Mr. Fox, as he had done in the preceding Session toward the Member for Malton; also on the question of the cotton tax; on that of the treatment of convicts under sentence of transportation; on the

sinking fund; and, in addition to others of less moment, on the Irish commercial propositions.

On the latter question, though siding chiefly with Opposition, he did not take so active a part as was expected, a feeling of delicacy preventing him, as he said in reply to an allusion from Mr. Pitt, as to his being an Irishman, from balancing minutely and invidiously, conflicting claims between the country of his nativity, and that of his adoption, when the latter had raised him from nothing, to stations of high public trust and honour, with the power to legislate, not for any one class of persons, or for any one spot, however dear that spot might be to him, but for the general interests of the kingdom at large.

Mr. Pitt's motion for reform in the representation drew from Mr. Burke some pointed animadversions, demanding how *he*, of all men, could assume that the people were not sufficiently represented in that House, when he was daily in the habit of boasting that his own place and preponderance there, were solely owing to the voice of the people? On the bill of the Minister for regulating the public offices, which Mr. Sheridan termed a mere rat-catching measure, he was equally severe, and continuing the allusion, ludicrously quoted—

> "Mice and rats, and such small deer,
> Had been Tom's food for seven long year."

Contrasting its biting and impracticable economy with the profusion countenanced in India, which would ultimately fall on the shoulders of England, he used the following extraordinary series of figures; new and forcible indeed, and conveying a striking impression

to the mind, but objectionable from their number, and from following each other in such quick succession; passages of this kind, however, are rare in his works :—

" He (Mr. Pitt) was desirous to draw a resource out of the crumbs dropped from the trenchers of penury. He was rasping from the marrowless bones of skeleton establishments an empirical alimentary powder to diet into a similitude of health the languishing chimeras of fraudulent reformation. But while Parliament looked with anxiety at his desperate and laborious trifling, while they were apprehensive that he would break his back with stooping to pick up chaff and straws, he recovers himself at an elastic bound; and with a broadcast swing of his arm, he squandered over his Indian field a sum far greater than the amount of all these establishments added together."

This *Indian field* now chiefly occupied Mr. Burke's thoughts, as he himself expressed it, " at all hours and seasons, in the retirements of summer, in the avocations of the winter, and even amid the snows (alluding to the ill-reception he had experienced the preceding session) that had lately been showering on his head." Besides the amendment to the Address, already noticed, he subsequently supported motions by other members on the same fruitful subject of India.

But his great effort, February 28th, was on the debts of the Nabob of Arcot, one of those remarkable outpourings of a most fertile and vigorous intellect, which on an unpromising theme, and under the disadvantage of rising last in the debate, seemed to combine all that could instruct, dazzle, and even

overpower the hearer. It has been said to be in some parts florid. But in energy, in rhetorical address, in a minute knowledge of India and especially the intricacies of the question itself, in the boldness of his attacks upon those of the Company's servants who were considered by their intrigues to have laid the foundation of these debts, in the clearness of his narrative and detail, it was rated equal to any thing ever delivered in Parliament. The oppressions exercised upon the neighbouring state of Tanjore, by the Nabob and his agents, had already produced much animadversion, and Mr. Burke being well informed of the circumstances from private information, as well as public documents, characterized the chief agent and counsellor of his Highness on these occasions, Mr. Paul B——d, as "the old betrayer, insulter, oppressor, and scourge, of a country which has for years been an object of an unremitted, but unhappily an unequal struggle, between the bounties of Providence to renovate and the wickedness of mankind to destroy."—Some of the spirit of the speech is said to have evaporated in the printed report.

Shortly after this period he suffered great agony of mind for some time, in consequence of a newspaper account of the loss, in a violent storm off the coast of Holland, of a Harwich packet, in which his son had embarked for the Continent. Fortunately the report proved untrue; he arrived in safety, and after visiting Holland, Flanders, and some of the adjoining states, was received with some distinction in the Court and capital of France. During his

father's tenure of power, he had been appointed Joint-receiver with Dr. King of the revenues of the Crown Lands, held for life; and after the death of the Marquis of Rockingham, Earl Fitzwilliam had made him auditor of his accounts.

Some lines were addressed to him on occasion of the above afflicting rumour, by an old friend in Ireland, beginning—

"*On a Report of Edmund Burke's Death, and of his Son having been lost at Sea.*

"Safely secluded in the silent shade,
Far from the clamour and the toils of state,
No foreign cares our calm repose invade,
One link alone connects us with the great.

"For Burke we love, and with affection dear
Our watchful eyes pursue his track of light;
And, when he mov'd in pow'r's resplendent sphere,
We bless'd the sphere where blaz'd an orb so bright.

"But when, with virtuous scorn and just disdain,
From these polluted scenes he nobly turn'd;
Left to corruption and her venal train,
We not for him but for our country mourn'd.

"To him each dear domestic joy belongs,
Joys more congenial to his gen'rous heart
Than guilty wealth, amass'd by cruel wrongs,
Than all that pow'r and splendour can impart.

"Oh, tell it not:—recal the tidings sore,
Which damp our fainting hearts with chilling breath,
Rude as the blast which ravag'd Belgia's shore,
Where the loud tempest rous'd the seeds of death.

"What costly sacrifice dost thou require,
Insatiate ocean? madly dost thou rave:—
Must such a son—the son of such a sire—
Must Burke's sole offspring glut thy greedy wave?

"If o'er his head thy murd'rous surge be roll'd,
While youth resists, and virtue pleads in vain,
Restore that treasure—though the corse be cold—
The mounting spirit thou could'st not detain."

It was at the opening of the next session, January 24th, 1786, that Mr. Burke entered on one of the most tempestuous scenes of his life—nearly the whole of which was a political storm—in the prosecution of Mr. Hastings, late Governor General of India, who had recently arrived in England.

Much consideration is necessary adequately to appreciate the degree of moral courage requisite for this undertaking, nothing so arduous or laborious having ever fallen to the lot of a member of the English legislature; for though the work was in some measure divided, much the greater part unavoidably fell to his share. It demanded not only uncommon capacity of mind, but the most effective, and popular, and Parlimentary *working* talents; an utter disregard of difficulty; a vast fund of local knowledge; a perseverance in mental and bodily labour not to be conquered; a contempt for obloquy and reproach of every kind, such as few men had fortitude enough to encounter; an acquaintance with the powers, interests, habits, actual condition, intrigues, and even villanies of nearly all India, such as no man, and scarcely any body of men out of the country, could be expected to possess.

The accused, besides, was no inconsiderable man. He was supposed to possess the personal good opinion of the King.* He had acquired the favour of the Board of Controul. He enjoyed the support of the India Company, which had profited by his sway. He had aggrandized the nation itself, which, satisfied with its acquisitions, felt little curiosity to inquire into the means employed to procure them; and in fact the subject, for two or three years before, would scarcely be listened to in Parliament. He had governed a vast empire for a series of years and was of course enabled to profit by the weight, in all cases great, which authority bestows. He had not only amassed a competent fortune himself, but, what was of more consequence to his political interest, had enriched more men than any half dozen Prime Ministers of England put together. He had necessarily many friends and a vast number of apologists, several of whom were in Parliament, others in different situations of influence, who, from the oblique morality with which all India questions were treated, scarcely considered as improprieties there, what in England they would have stigmatized as unquestionable crimes. In addition to all these, the evidence had to come from a vast distance; qualified by some who thought the blame ought rather to fall on the agents than on the principal; by some who hesitated to condemn proceedings which had been the source of their own gain; by some who shrunk

* During the trial a caricature was exhibited of Mr. Hastings trundling His Majesty in a wheelbarrow, with the label, "What a man buys he may sell." "Well," said the King good-humouredly on seeing it, "I have been represented in many extraordinary situations, but in a wheelbarrow is really something new."

from the odium of coming forward, or being considered as public accusers; all which circumstances were observed to operate powerfully in the subsequent evidence given upon the trial of the Governor General.

Against all these considerations, against the opinion of some of his own party, and in some degree against his own personal interests, Mr. Burke obstinately persevered, winning the nation over to his opinion before the end of the session, and what was of no less consequence, constraining the Minister, who displayed symptoms of hostility to the inquiry at first, to the subsequent observance of impartiality. If he eventually failed in convicting the accused on account of legal technicalities and impediments cast in his way, it is less matter for wonder, than that under so many obstacles, and in the teeth of so many powerful interests, he could carry the cause to a decision. But the sentence of the House of Lords was a matter of minor importance in his opinion, for the moment the impeachment was voted by the Commons, he felt, as he often said, that the great end for which he undertook it—public justice, was answered.

To those who knew little of his character, the motive for this gratuitous labour remained a puzzle, or was solved by the silly idea quite unworthy of notice, that it arose from a slight shown by the Governor General to Mr. William Burke. It is possible, indeed, remembering how the inquiry was approved and forwarded by Mr. Fox, that some latent feeling existed of indirectly justifying the India bill, by exposing more fully to general indignation the enormities which that measure was meant

to correct. But the great and direct inducement, beyond all question, was a detestation of any thing like oppression or injustice inherent in the man; not simply as a moral principle, but an ingrafted feeling; ardent, and perhaps too unrestrained for the imposing station he occupied in the country, but which had been shown in all the chief actions of his life, public and private; in upholding against oppression the Commons of America at one time—and the King, Nobility, and Clergy of France, at another; in resenting the tyranny attempted to be exercised over him by Mr. Hamilton in the early part of his life, and what he considered the harshness, reproach, and injury shown him by Mr. Fox and others of the party towards its decline; "in whose breast," as he subsequently said of himself, "no anger, durable or vehement, has ever been kindled but by what he considered as tyranny." His philanthropy and integrity were constantly eulogized in the House of Commons by all the eminent men most opposed to him on public affairs, and never more so than during the whole progress of this prosecution.

It is necessary also to remember that it was no sudden burst of passion, no transient or immediate feeling of resentment, but adopted after much and serious deliberation. Since 1780, when, as a member of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, the conduct of Mr. Hastings had been attacked and investigated before him, he had constantly recommended his recall, and expressed an opinion that he deserved punishment. He had no other dislike to that gentleman, he said, than a conviction of his mis-government, persevered in against repeated re-

monstrances and orders; he knew nothing otherwise of him; he, and the rest of the Committee, had begun with Sir Elijah Impey and only picked up Mr. Hastings in their way. His attention being thus excited to a subject so important to the good of our Indian empire, there appeared ample matter for further inquiry, as almost every fresh arrival from the East added to the list of alleged oppressions or offences by the Governor General. Strong dissatisfaction, alternating with votes of approbation, had been expressed at his conduct previous to this, by the Court of Directors at home; but orders for recall were so intermingled with orders to remain, that to many, not in the secret, the proceedings at the India House became a riddle;—the main solution of which was, that the Directors thought many of his measures wrong, and desired his return; the Proprietors on the other hand, simply found them profitable, and therefore wished him to remain.

In 1776, the former voted his recall; while the latter body, as was then in their power, according to the charter, at a General Court, rescinded the order. Shortly afterward, Mr. Grant and Mr. Macleane, a former friend of Mr. Burke and now the confidential agent of Mr. Hastings, arrived and tendered the resignation of the latter, which was accepted; but the Governor General, finding himself taken at his word, denied having given that gentleman any such authority, and resolutely kept his station; and as Mr. Macleane perished at sea on his return to India, this extraordinary misunderstanding was never explained to the world. In 1779, 1780, 1781, in settling the government, he was continued. In 1782, Mr. Dundas, as

Chairman of the Secret Committee, moved and carried a string of the severest resolutions against him, and among others his recall, which was ordered accordingly; but the Proprietors having still by the constitution of the Company, the power so to do, again negatived the order. At length, in February, 1785, he quitted Bengal of his own accord, just as Lord Macartney had been appointed to it from Madras, but whose assumption of the supreme authority it was declared Mr. Hastings and his party had determined to resist even by force, had that nobleman reached Calcutta before he embarked.

On reaching England, the Directors passed a vote of thanks for his long and meritorious services, though for years they had complained that his proceedings were most objectionable, that he despised their authority, and never paid the slightest regard to their orders when they happened to be at variance with his own opinion. And Mr. Dundas had already declared that "Mr. Hastings rarely quitted Calcutta that his track was not followed by the deposition of some prince, the desertion of some ally, or the depopulation of some country."

All these circumstances, in addition to the specific offences laid to his charge, tended to confirm Mr. Burke in his purpose, and to lead him to believe that his motives at any rate for inquiring into the conduct of such an imperious and refractory servant could not be questioned. Alluding to these during the preliminary proceedings he observed:

"Least of all could it be said, with any colour of truth, that he was actuated by passion. Anger, indeed, he had felt, but surely not a blameable

anger; for who ever heard of an inquiring anger, a digesting anger, a collating anger, an examining anger, or a selecting anger? The anger he had felt was an uniform, steady, public principle, without any intermixture of private animosity; that anger, which five years ago warmed his breast, he felt precisely the same, and unimpaired, at that moment."

"Let who will shrink back," said he, touching on the same theme, in 1785, "I shall be found at my post. Baffled, discountenanced, subdued, discredited, as the cause of justice and humanity is, it will be only the dearer to me. Whoever, therefore, shall at any time bring before you any thing toward the relief of our distressed fellow-citizens in India, and towards the subversion of the present most corrupt and oppressive system for its government, in me shall find a weak, I am afraid, but a steady, earnest, and faithful assistant."

Ten years afterward, when the trial had been disposed of, he again alluded to his motives.

"Were I to call for a reward (which I have never done), it should be for those (services) in which for fourteen years, without intermission, I have showed the most industry, and had the least success; I mean in the affairs of India. They are those on which I value myself the most; most for the importance; most for the labour; most for the judgment; most for constancy and perseverance in the pursuit. *Others may value them most for the intention. In that surely they are not mistaken.*"

The belief in Mr. Hastings's guilt was very general in India as well as in England, by those

who had the nearest views of what was going on. Among these, in addition to many others, was the late Mr. Charles Grant, whose knowledge of India, whose integrity and abilities were equally unquestioned, and to whom for his eminent services a statue has just been voted by the company. To the last moment of his life this gentleman stedfastly persevered on all occasions in the strongest censure of the obnoxious Governor General, and as firmly resisted every proposition that could be considered complimentary to his memory.

From authority which the writer cannot question, he is likewise informed, that a great statesman of the present day, formerly high in authority in India, and from his knowledge acquired in that station the best possible judge of the matter, entertains no doubt whatever of the guilt of Mr. Hastings, particularly on the first three charges, and that he ought to have been convicted.

In addition to this, it is well known that Mr. Dundas under Lord North's administration, was the first accuser of Mr. Hastings, procured the vote for his recal, and threatened him with punishment. Mr. Francis also, in the debate in 1788 on the propriety of making him a manager of the impeachment, boasted, that "he supplied the information, furnished the materials, and *prompted the prosecution*, and therefore he would not stand aloof if the house thought proper to employ him in that capacity." It is, therefore, extremely unjust to consider Mr. Burke, as is frequently done through ignorance or malice, either as the original accuser, or as the *only* instigator of a prosecution which unquestionably arose from the very purest motives.

The obloquy cast upon him during the trial, in books, pamphlets, and newspapers, in verse and in prose, in private and in many public discussions not excepting even the courts of law, was nearly as great as that thrown on the Governor General. A stranger, from reading the publications of the day, would have been at a loss to tell which was the accused, and which the accuser. His language on all occasions, the arrangements during the proceedings, the smallest inadvertency committed by the other managers, and particularly the length of the trial, which arose more from the nature of the House of Lords as a Court of Judicature, and the mode of defence, than from the managers, proved fruitful themes of abuse directed against Mr. Burke alone; to forward which, money to the amount of 20,000*l.* was liberally distributed for that purpose to the press. An imprudent dispute between the agent of the prisoner, Major Scott, and a printer of a newspaper, disclosed a bill which excited some amusement when made public, the items regularly marked and charged running thus—"Letters against Mr. Burke," "Strictures upon the Conduct of Mr. Burke," "Attacking Mr. Burke's veracity," the latter being charged at five shillings—a small sum he jocularly remarked for such a purpose—and others of similar import. In addition to these, squibs without number issued from various quarters, one of which, Simkin's letters, though not the best of their class, formed a tolerably fair and amusing satire on the conduct and speeches of the chief managers, without more malignity towards Mr. Burke than such things prescriptively claim; the opening alludes to one of his peculiarities:—

With respect to processions, and taking of places,
By Masters and Judges, and Lordships and Graces;
According to promise, I now shall describe
The procession of Burke, and his eloquent tribe.
First Edmund walks in at the head of the group,
That powerful chief of that powerful troop;
What awful solemnity's seen in his gait,
While the nod of his head beats the time to his feet.

An epigram, said to be written by the late Lord Ellenborough, then one of the prisoner's counsel, and the idea of which, though not acknowledged, is borrowed from Mr. Burke himself in a passage in the letter to Lord Kenmare, was delivered to him in a letter just before opening one of the charges, in order that the sting might discompose him in the performance of this duty, but he calmly conveyed it to his pocket without further notice. It is remarkable that the reputed author of this, after being repeatedly reprimanded on the trial for his violence of language, lived to exhibit on the judgment-seat, where above all other places it is least excusable, the same violence and the same irritability which he had censured in Mr. Burke, for whom, as an accuser at the bar, there was some apology; in addition to a proud and domineering spirit and conduct, which Mr. Burke never displayed in any station.

A conviction of the guilt of the Governor General remained in his accuser's mind to the last hour of his life, and was expressed to his friends whenever the subject was mentioned; to others not so intimate, he was nearly as unreserved: writing to Mr. Moser, April 5, 1796, he says:

"I am rather surprised at your speaking of such a man as Hastings with any degree of respect; at

present I say nothing of those who chose to take his guilt upon themselves. I do not say I am not deeply concerned; God forbid that I should speak any other language. Others may be content to prevaricate in judgment; it is not my taste; but they who attack me for my 14 years' labours on this subject, ought not to forget that I always acted under public authority, and not of my own fancy; and that in condemning me they asperse the whole House of Commons for their conduct, continued for the greater part of three Parliaments."

During the progress of the investigation, Mr. Pitt repeatedly said, that it was conducted by the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Burke) with every degree of fairness, openness, and candour, of which it was susceptible. "The affairs of India," said Mr. Fox, "had long been hid in a darkness as hostile to inquiry as it was friendly to guilt; but by the exertions of ONE MAN, these clouds had been dissipated. His ardent virtue, his sublime genius, and that glowing enthusiasm so essential to both, had, with the application of years, left them nothing of information at present to desire." He frequently stated that no man but his right honourable friend could have accomplished the more than Herculean task of the investigation itself, or surmounted the incessant and vexatious difficulties at every step thrown in his way. These, during the trial before the House of Lords, were of an extraordinary nature, scarcely a point of evidence being admitted against the prisoner without quibble and cavil, discussion and adjournment, and ultimately from the forms of law, a decision in his favour. No reader,

perhaps, but a lawyer, will be satisfied with the course of the trial. Few conscientious men will be pleased with the result of it, or the means uniformly resorted to, to evade inquiry into the merits of the transactions themselves, which, in the eye of morality, will leave Mr. Hastings, if not a guilty man, at least a suspected one; for, in the general opinion, as well as in that of an acute historian, if his accusers did not prove his guilt, he himself did not prove his innocence.*

On the question of delay in the trial, urged pretty frequently in 1790, Mr. Burke alleged that, though nominally of three years' duration, it was in reality only 64 days, at four hours each day; that the managers could not possibly be responsible for the delays, prorogations, and adjournments of the House of Lords with which they had nothing whatever to do; that even 64 days was not an unprecedented thing in their own House, for an Election Committee had continued 90 days—and that as the number of the charges and the magnitude of the offences were greater than had ever been laid to the charge of any one impeached by that House, so no fair comparison could be drawn between the periods required for trial.

Mr. Pitt repeatedly declared, that, looking to the magnitude and difficulty of the undertaking, he did not think there was any ground for the charge of delay; but if any unnecessary delay existed, assuredly it rested not with the managers. Many attributed it to the artifices of the defendant or his

* Mill's History of British India, vol. v.

lawyers. Mr. Dundas pointedly said, "there seemed no little art used in the clamour about delay, for it was always raised toward the end of a session, but never at the beginning of it, when steps might possibly be taken to provide a remedy. No share of the blame rested with that House, or with the managers. *If there were any delay in the trial, it lay, he cared not who heard him, or where his declaration might be repeated, at the door of the House of Lords.*" It appears by computation, that had the House sat as an ordinary Court of Judicature ten hours a day, the trial would have been finished in two months.

Another charge urged against Mr. Burke was, the intemperance and asperity of his language toward the prisoner. To this it has been replied, with great truth, that no prosecutor's temper was ever before so tried by difficulties of every kind, by objections, by cavils, by libels without number out of doors; by taunts, by irritating language, and indirect abuse, within; and towards the close of the trial, by the obvious distaste toward the prosecution itself, displayed by some of the Court whom he addressed. One remarkable instance of this excited general notice. On the 25th of May, 1793, when he was cross-examining Mr. Auriol, and pushing him closely and at some length on account of the obvious distaste of the witness to be as explicit as was desired, the Archbishop of York who had already evinced strong symptoms of impatience, and whose son had been in high and profitable employments in India under Mr. Hastings, started up and said, that "he examined the witness as if he were examining not a

gentleman but a pick-pocket; that the illiberality and the inhumanity of the managers in the course of the long trial could not be exceeded by Marat and Robespierre, had the conduct of the trial been committed to them." Mr. Burke, with great dignity, and his accustomed presence of mind, replied, "I have not in my public capacity heard one word of what has been spoken, and I shall act as if I had not." The words, however, being published in a newspaper, excited severe comments in the House of Commons, though a motion for further proceedings against the printer was lost.

"Upon reading the printed minutes of the evidence with due care," says an historian, with whom, however, from political causes, Mr. Burke does not stand so well as he otherwise might—"I perceive that Mr. Burke treated the witness as an unwilling witness, which he evidently was; as a witness who, though incapable of perjury, was yet desirous of keeping back whatever was unfavourable to Mr. Hastings, and from whom information unfavourable to Mr. Hastings, if he possessed it, must be extorted by that coercion which it is the nature and to the very purpose of cross-examination to apply. Of the tones employed by Mr. Burke, the mere reader of the minute cannot judge; but of the questions there set down, there is not one which approaches to indecorum, or makes one undue insinuation. It was the Right Reverend Prelate, therefore, who betrayed an intemperance of mind, which as ill accorded with the justice of the case, as with the decencies of either his judicial or sacerdotal character."*

* Mill's History of British India.

The same writer gives some general and just reasons for the odium beginning to be cast upon the managers towards the conclusion of the trial.—"The favour with which the cause of Mr. Hastings was known to be viewed in the highest family in the kingdom, could not be without a powerful effect on a powerful class. The frequency with which decisions and speeches, favourable to him, were made in the House of Lords; the defence which he received from the great body of the lawyers; the conversation of a multitude of gentlemen from India, who mixed with every part of society; the uncommon industry and skill with which a great number of persons, who openly professed themselves the friends or agents of Mr. Hastings, worked, through the press and other channels, upon the public mind; and not least, the disfavour which is borne to the exposure of the offences of men in high situations in the bosom of that powerful class of society which furnishes the men by whom these situations are commonly filled; all these circumstances, united to others which are less known, succeeded at last in making it a kind of fashion to take part with Mr. Hastings, and to rail against his accusers."*

The facts of the trial, which immediately relate to the chief manager, are speedily told. On the 16th of June, 1785, Mr. Hastings arrived in England; and on the 20th, Mr. Burke gave notice of an inquiry into his conduct next session. The very day of the meeting of Parliament, Major Scott, trusting, it appeared, to a belief that the Minister would negative the motion for inquiry, called upon

* Mill's History of British India, vol. v. p. 181, 182.

Mr. Burke to proceed; and received the reply of the Duke of Parma to Henry IV. of France, when challenged to bring his forces into the field and instantly decide their disputes—that he knew very well what to do, and had not come so far to be directed by an enemy.—Mr. Fox declared that if his Right Hon. Friend did not bring it forward, other Members should supply his place; a sufficient indication that it was a general, not, as was said, an individual measure.

In February and March, Mr. Burke moved for various papers, and declared his intention to proceed by impeachment at the bar of the House of Lords. In April the charges were delivered in; June the 1st, he opened the first charge,—that of driving the Rohillas from their country—which, though formerly reprobated by the House as an iniquitous proceeding, was now held not to afford matter for crimination. To the second, brought forward by Mr. Fox, that of the tyranny exercised over the Rajah of Benares, Mr. Pitt assented, when the friends of the Governor General turning round upon the Minister, accused him loudly of treachery, asserting they had been led by hints and promises to expect a different result.

The remaining charges were gone through in the succeeding session, commencing 25th January, 1787, and approved in general by the Minister, Mr. Sheridan opening with the celebrated speech on the Begum charge. A committee of impeachment was then formed; on the 25th of April, the articles were delivered in by the chairman, Mr. Burke, and on the 9th of May considered; when Mr. Pitt, in the very strongest language he could use, voted

heartily and conscientiously, he said, for the impeachment. Next day, Mr. Burke accused the prisoner at the bar of the House of Lords, in the name of the Commons of England.

After a few preliminary proceedings, in the session of 1787—1788, in which Mr. Burke complained of being wholly crippled by the rejection of Mr. Francis as a Member of the committee, Westminster-Hall was opened in form, the 13th of February, when he led the procession thither, being as well as the other managers in full dress, followed by the House of Commons, Clerks of Parliament, Masters in Chancery, the Serjeants at law, Judges, House of Peers, and Royal Family, the Prince of Wales coming last.

Two days were occupied in preliminary matters; on the 15th, before eight o'clock in the morning, though the proceedings did not commence before twelve, the Hall was crowded to excess, 164 Peers being also present, anxious to hear the opening speech, of which the historian of the trial gives the following account.

"Mr. Burke immediately rose and made his obedience to the Court; every eye was at this moment rivetted upon him. 'He stood forth, he said, at the command of the Commons of Great Britain, as the accuser of Warren Hastings.' Mr. Burke then stopped for above a minute, at the end of which he resumed, and continued his speech for two hours and a half. It was grave and temperate, yet pathetic and affecting. Every expression and sentiment was appropriate; and though, in the progress of it, he led the ignorant to the most familiar acquaintance with the origin of the crimes and the

evils of India, he astonished the most knowing with the new aspect he gave to the whole, after it had been so long agitated and thoroughly discussed: First having apostrophized the tribunal before which he stood—congratulated his country on possessing so powerful an instrument of justice, and so authoritative a corrector of abuse—and hoped that no corruptions would ever taint, and no societies of special pleading and of Old Bailey prevarication be able to undermine it."

The speech of the 16th, when the number of Peers present was increased to 175, occupied about three hours and a half, in which he severely commented upon the "geographical morality" as he happily termed it, of Mr. Hastings; a set of principles suited only to a particular climate, so that what was peculation and tyranny in Europe, lost both its name and its essence in India.

A fine burst of indignant eloquence occurred when alluding to the unlimited authority assumed by the Governor General. "But Mr. Hastings had pleaded the local customs of Hindostan as requiring the coercion of arbitrary power. *He* indeed to claim arbitrary power! From whom could he derive, or by what audacity could he claim, such a power? He could not have derived it from the East India Company, for they had none to confer. He could not have received it from his Sovereign, for the Sovereign had it not to bestow. It could not have been given by either House of Parliament—for it was unknown to the British Constitution!" After alluding to the laws of India as well as of England, and instancing the Koran—the Institutes of Timur—the Gentoo Code—all opposed to every idea of tyrannical

usurpation as strong and steadfast as our own statutes at large—he proceeded. "Talk to me any where of power, and I'll tell you of protection! Mention a magistrate, and the idea follows of property! Show me any government, and you are to see the proposed interest of the governed! Power constituted otherwise is a monster—it is impossible!—in every system where there is any notion of the justice of God or the good of mankind.

"To act or think otherwise is blasphemy to religion, no less than confusion in social order! For 'Every good and perfect gift is of God'—and what good gift of God to man can be more perfect than the innate idea of justice and mercy—the law written in our hearts—the *primum vivens*, the *ultimum moriens*, of every being that has the boast of reason!"

The 18th was chiefly occupied in detailing the characters and horrible cruelties of some of the native agents of Government while grossly abusing their authority in the provinces. The 19th concluded this oration, or series of orations, occupying above three hours each day; and so great was the effect of the whole upon his auditory, that it was only after a considerable lapse of time and repeated efforts, that Mr. Fox who had next to address the court, could obtain a hearing.

From the illness of the King and the absence of the Judges, the proceedings did not commence till the 20th of April, 1789; and next day, he began another powerful oration on the sixth charge of bribery and corruption. Each party soon accused the other of a wish to delay the proceedings, but

the managers to obviate the charge on their part, voluntarily determined to confine themselves to the more serious heads of delinquency, omitting the others for the sake of expedition.

The re-assembling of the new Parliament, in 1790, produced animated discussions in both Houses, whether the impeachment had not abated by the dissolution of the old; which after much discussion was decided in the negative against the opinion of the law authorities. Public anxiety on the trial had, however, abated, for the forms of the Court, and the complicated nature of the investigation, presented invincible obstacles to that quick progress, which is always necessary to keep alive popular interest on such occasions; and it continued without any other event of consequence than the severe speeches of the chief manager, often excited, however, by the annoyances he received, till April 23d, 1795, when a verdict of acquittal passed; the Lord Chancellor voting with the Minority who thought him guilty. The duty of the managers, indeed, had terminated in June preceding, by summing up on the different charges, Mr. Burke being the last; and his concluding oration, which commenced on the 28th of May, continued for nine days. The thanks of the House, moved by Mr. Pitt, and seconded by Mr. Dundas, were immediately voted to the managers.

Mr. Hastings, like every one else under similar circumstances, is fully entitled to the benefit of the verdict recorded in his favour; but when not content with this, he or his friends even to a recent period, continued to impugn the motives of the pro-

secutors, less reserve is necessary in adverting to his general character as an Indian ruler.

He was a man of considerable powers of mind—bold, assuming, and energetic; but possessed of that species of energy which, in pushing its own views or interests, seldom stopped to consider the rights, or condition, or feelings, of others who stood in his way. He forgot that Princes in India, like those elsewhere, were entitled to some degree of consideration and delicacy from the station they occupied in society, and especially in their own country; that good faith, justice and sincerity, are in some degree necessary even in dealing with persons of an opposite character; that moderation in the exercise of authority is commonly the wisest policy; that an arbitrary spirit, assumed by the principal in government, is sure to become tyranny in the subordinate agents. From long familiarity with the country, his mind had become perverted to the belief that he was at perfect liberty to adopt the practices of the Asiatics, however unprincipled, in matters of government; forgetting that such conduct compromised the English credit and character, and might possibly by persevering in it shake our future hold upon this "Empire of opinion."

Many of his measures were undoubtedly brilliant, many very questionable, not a few at variance with all English ideas of justice, or even expediency; an opinion in which some of the latest and best writers on India concur.* He had so thoroughly entered into the spirit of an Asiatic monarch, that he seemed

* Mill's History of India.—Malcolm's Political History of India; *passim.*

to think the mere expression of his commands or wishes formed evidence enough of their utility and propriety; and that among Hindoos, whenever the slightest necessity pressed him on a point of policy, the end to be answered justified the means; a species of *geographical morality*, as Mr. Burke emphatically termed it, which he handled in the severest terms. Just in the same spirit, and on many of the same pleas, did Buonaparte put his foot on the necks of the prostrate Kings and nations of Europe; and in the page of history, the verdict which condemns the one cannot possibly acquit the other.

To try the Governor General therefore was a matter of positive duty, in order to clear the character of the nation. To acquit him was, perhaps, a measure of necessity due to the quibbles of law of which he invariably took advantage in every stage of the trial, to the ill-defined nature of his power, to the acknowledged difficulties by which he was sometimes beset, and to the spirit of some of his instructions; which, to gratify the cupidity of the Proprietors of India stock in Europe, seemed to embody the pith of the thrifty father's advice to his son—"make money, my son; honestly, if possible, but at all events make money;"—and he succeeded in pouring into their coffers a sum of nine millions, by means which no glossing or apology, however specious, can make pure.

The length of the trial, indeed, formed no inconsiderable punishment of itself. But the investigation did much good by evincing that, though the Legislature had long slumbered over the acts of the India administration, impunity from that quarter

was no longer to be expected. Its remissness hitherto had been one great cause for the continuance of abuse; and it is certain, that had the conduct of Lord Clive, or of those who deposed and imprisoned Lord Pigott, or of Sir Thomas Rumbold and others whom Mr. Dundas accused, been subjected to a similar ordeal, Mr. Hastings would not have attempted, or at least not have continued, his more objectionable proceedings, in the face of certain inquiry, and probable punishment.

Memorable as the trial is for the space it will occupy in history and the excitement it produced in the nation, it is still more remarkable for the displays, or rather feats of genius in its conductors, which are unparalleled in this or in any other country; "shaking the walls that surrounded them," in the words of Mr. Erskine, "with anathemas of superhuman eloquence." It was in fact an æra in this art, a theme for the emulative oratory of Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Windham, and others, names that ennoble any page on which they are inscribed, who seemed pitted for victory as much over each other as over the accused.

But above them all, beyond dispute, stood Mr. Burke. He had devoted more attention to the subject, and in some degree staked his reputation, that there were urgent grounds at least for inquiry; he was master of it at a time when few others knew or cared much about the matter; he had more at stake in the result, in consequence of its being represented, however untruly, as *his* prosecution; the reproach and misrepresentation to which it gave rise, served not to damp, but rather to increase and sharpen the energy of his mind, while the occa-

sion was peculiarly suited to exhibit the vast extent of his knowledge, and the unrivalled variety of his powers. All these considerations, bearing powerfully on the point thus coming to issue, produced exertions without precedent or example; so extraordinary indeed, that, upon a low calculation, the whole of his speeches and writings connected with it, which at present occupy *seven* octavo volumes, would fill at the least *five* others if fully collected; and to give an intelligible outline of each speech or paper, would of itself make no inconsiderable book. The principal, however, are to be found in his Works already published, or in the concluding volumes which are soon to appear.

The greatest amazement, even to those who knew him best, was excited by the opening speech or speeches of the impeachment, which a modern writer, adverse to the impeachment itself, thus characterizes in the general terms employed at the time:

"Never were the powers of that wonderful man displayed to such advantage as on this occasion; and he astonished even those who were most intimately acquainted with him by the vast extent of his reading, the variety of his resources, the minuteness of his information, and the lucid order in which he arranged the whole for the support of his object, and to make a deep impression on the minds of his hearers."

Nothing certainly in the way of fact, and nothing, perhaps, even in theatrical representation, ever exceeded the effects produced among the auditory, by the detail of the cruelties of Debi Sing, which he gave on the third day, from the reports of Mr. Pa-

terson, who had been sent as commissioner to inquire into the circumstances. The whole statement * is appalling and heart-sickening in the extreme; a convulsive sensation of horror, affright, and smothered execration, pervaded all of the male part of his hearers, and audible sobbings and screams, attended with tears and faintings, the female. His own feelings were scarcely less overpowering; he dropped his head upon his hands, and for some minutes was unable to proceed; he recovered sufficiently to go on a little further, but, being obliged to cease from speaking twice at short intervals, His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, to relieve him, at length moved the adjournment of the House. Alluding to the close of this day, the writer of the History of the Trial, says—"In this part of his speech Mr. Burke's descriptions were more vivid, more harrowing, and more horrific, than human utterance on either fact or fancy, perhaps, ever formed before.

* See Burke's Works, vol. xiii. p. 320—327; but the whole history of the monster Debi Sing, from p. 296 of the same volume, is a matter of deep interest. Mr. Hastings in reply urged that he neither knew of nor countenanced his crimes; this probably was true; but the man's character was known to him before he was appointed to the situation, having been previously dismissed for gross mal-administration. What was more extraordinary and suspicious, though a rebellion had been produced by the cruelties of this man, Mr. Paterson's Official Reports were treated as libels upon him, and the commissioner, strange to say, returned to those who sent him upon the inquiry as the accused, not the accuser, Debi Sing having contrived to turn the tables upon him.—Mr. Hastings's administration abounded in such anomalies, and in the most unaccountable inconsistencies and contradictions, which, by the minutes in council, he seemed to take a kind of pride in displaying and recording.—Mr. Burke said that 40,000*l.* was the bribe paid for Debi Sing's appointment.

The agitation of most people was very apparent—Mrs. Sheridan was so overpowered, that she fainted: several others were as powerfully affected." Mrs. Siddons is said to have been one of the number.

"His powers," says a political adversary,* "were never more conspicuous than on that memorable day, on which he exposed the enormities of a subaltern agent of oriental despotism—the tortures inflicted by his orders, the flagrant injustice committed by his authority, the pollution that ensued in consequence of his sanction—when he painted agonizing Nature, vibrating in horrid suspense between life and destruction—when he described, in the climax of crimes, 'death introduced into the very sources of life,' the bosoms of his auditors became convulsed with passion, and those of more delicate organs, or weaker frame, actually swooned away. Nay, after the storm of eloquence had spent its force, and his voice for the moment ceased, his features still expressed the energy of his feelings, his hand seemed to threaten punishment, and his brow to meditate vengeance."

The testimony of the accused party himself is, perhaps, the strongest ever borne to the powers of any speaker of any country. "For half an hour," said Mr. Hastings, "I looked up at the orator in a reverie of wonder; and during that space I actually felt myself the most culpable man on earth;" adding, however, "But I recurred to my own bosom, and there found a consciousness that consoled me under all I heard and all I suffered."

Even the flinty temperament of the Chancellor,

* Dr. Glennie.

Lord Thurlow, was affected almost to producing, what Burke applied to him on another occasion, *iron tears down Pluto's cheek;* and, judging by his expressions at the time, his faith in Mr. Hasting's purity seemed staggered. Addressing the Peers some days afterwards, he concluded a handsome eulogium on the speech, by observing, "that their Lordships all knew the effect upon the auditors, many of whom had not to that moment, and, perhaps, never would, recover from the shock it had occasioned."

The peroration, though it wants the last polish of the powerful pen of the author, has been frequently mentioned as one of the most impressive in the records of judicial oratory. After adverting to various alleged offences of the accused, he proceeds—

"In the name of the Commons of England, I charge all this villany upon Warren Hastings, in this last moment of my application to you.

"My Lords, what is it, that we want here to complete a great act of national justice? Do we want a cause, my Lords? You have the cause of oppressed princes, of undone women of the first rank, of desolated provinces, and of wasted kingdoms.

"Do you want a criminal, my Lords? When was there so much iniquity ever laid to the charge of any one?—No, my Lords, you must not look to punish any other such delinquent from India.—Warren Hastings has not left substance enough in India to nourish such another delinquent.

"My Lords, is it a prosecutor you want? You have before you the Commons of Great Britain as prosecutors; and, I believe, my Lords, that the sun,

in its beneficent progress round the world, does not behold a more glorious sight than that of men, separated from a remote people by the material bounds and barriers of nature, united by the bond of a social and moral community;—all the Commons of England resenting, as their own, the indignities and cruelties that are offered to all the people of India.

"Do we want a tribunal? My Lords, no example of antiquity—nothing in the modern world—nothing in the range of human imagination, can supply us with a tribunal like this. My Lords, here we see virtually in the mind's eye that sacred majesty of the crown, under whose authority you sit, and whose power you exercise. We see in that invisible authority, what we all feel in reality and life, the beneficent powers and protecting justice of His Majesty. We have here the Heir Apparent to the crown, such as the fond wishes of the people of England wish an Heir Apparent of the crown to be. We have here all the branches of the Royal Family in a situation between majesty and subjection, between the sovereign and the subject—offering a pledge in that situation for the support of the rights of the crown and the liberties of the people, both which extremities they touch.

"My Lords, we have a great hereditary Peerage here; those who have their own honour, the honour of their ancestors, and of their posterity, to guard; and who will justify, as they have always justified, that provision in the Constitution, by which justice is made an hereditary office.

"My Lords, we have here a new nobility, who have risen and exalted themselves by various merits,

by great military services, which have extended the fame of this country from the rising to the setting sun: we have those, who by various civil merits and various civil talents, have been exalted to a situation which they well deserve, and in which they will justify the favour of their sovereign, and the good opinion of their fellow-subjects, and make them rejoice to see those virtuous characters, that were the other day upon a level with them, now exalted above them in rank, but feeling with them in sympathy, what they felt in common with them before.

"We have persons exalted from the practice of the law, from the place in which they administered high, though subordinate justice, to a seat here, to enlighten with their knowledge, and to strengthen with their votes, those principles which have distinguished the courts in which they have presided.

"My Lords, you have here also the lights of our religion; you have the Bishops of England. My Lords, you have that true image of the primitive church in its ancient form, in its ancient ordinances, purified from the superstitions and the vices which a long succession of ages will bring upon the best institutions. You have the representatives of that religion which says, that their God is love, that the very vital spirit of their institution is charity; a religion which so much hates oppression, that, when the God, whom we adore, appeared in human form, he did not appear in a form of greatness and majesty, but in sympathy with the lowest of the people,—and thereby made it a firm and ruling principle, that their welfare was the object of all government; since the person, who was the Master of Nature,

chose to appear himself in a subordinate situation. These are the considerations which influence them, which animate them, and will animate them, against all oppression; knowing, that He, who is called first among them, and first among us all, both of the flock that is fed, and of those who feed it, made Himself 'the servant of all.'

"My Lords, these are the securities which we have in all the constituent parts of the body of this House. We know them, we reckon, we rest upon them, and commit safely the interests of India and of humanity into your hands. Therefore, it is with confidence, that, ordered by the Commons,

"I impeach Warren Hastings, Esquire, of high crimes and misdemeanors.

"I impeach him in the name of the Commons of Great Britain, in Parliament assembled, whose parliamentary trust he has betrayed.

"I impeach him in the name of all the Commons of Great Britain, whose national character he has dishonoured.

"I impeach him, in the name of the people of India, whose laws, rights, and liberties he has subverted; whose properties he has destroyed, whose country he has laid waste and desolate.

"I impeach him in the name, and by virtue of those eternal laws of justice, which he has violated.

"I impeach him in the name of human nature itself, which he has cruelly outraged, injured, and oppressed, in both sexes, in every age, rank, situation, and condition of life.

"And I conjure this high and sacred Court to let not these pleadings be heard in vain!"

Of the physical as well as mental exertions of Mr. Burke during this arduous investigation, some idea may be formed from the fact, that for weeks together, even at so late a period of the proceedings as 1793, he was constantly occupied between Westminster Hall and the House of Commons without quitting them, from nine o'clock in the morning until six or seven in the evening, and often, when there was any debate of consequence, to a much later hour.

During the busiest sessions of the impeachment, 1786, 1787, and 1788, Mr. Burke's attention was of course chiefly, though not solely, occupied by its details. The other measures in which he took part were in opposing, "with an almost overwhelming torrent of eloquence," in the language used at the time, the extension of power to the Governor General of India by the East India Judicature Bill;* and the declaratory act, which indirectly gave to Ministry much of the power more openly assumed by the India bill, of opposition in 1783, and for which they lost their places.

He also came forward on the constitution of the governments of Canada; on a petition from the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Common Council, against forestallers and regrators, the laws against whom, as a remnant of barbarism, he had been the means of repealing in 1772; in warmly approving, in the name of Opposition, the plan

* What he recommended was a combination of three things—a government by law (not as in India by will)—trial by jury—and publicity in every executive and judicial concern.—Mr. Mill, who injures a good history here and there by peculiar opinions, and hasty conclusions, presumes most inconclusively against Mr. Burke's honesty or wisdom from this opposition; yet, in the same breath, approves of his remedies.

for the consolidation of the Customs; the vote of money for the American loyalists; the treaty with the Landgrave of Hesse and the renewal of our continental connexions as a judicious and politic measure when adopted as part of a system; the provision for a meritorious public servant Sir John Skynner; in pushing forward the Slave Trade Abolition question now taken up by Mr. Wilberforce; and other less important matters.

The commercial treaty with France gave occasion to some bitterly-sarcastic sparring between him and the Minister. The aggression being on the part of the former may perhaps be put down to the account of party spirit, for in a subsequent speech on the same topic, which Mr. Pitt, notwithstanding their former encounter, characterized as displaying a very singular share of ability, Mr. Burke differed from the other Members of Opposition, in admitting that, though he questioned the policy of that treaty, he had not the slightest fears of its injuring our own manufactures.

While speaking on this subject, and drawing a masterly comparison of the relative circumstances and capabilities of the two countries, which drew cheers from both sides of the House, he took occasion to reply ably, but satirically, to some observations made on a former occasion by a Member, who, being one of nine said to be returned by a noble Earl, had thence acquired the ludicrous appellation of *nine pins*. Mr. Fox, entering the House at the moment of the cheer, inquired of Mr. Sheridan the cause of it. "Oh! nothing of consequence," replied the wit, "only Burke knocking down one of the *nine pins!*"

The tension of mind produced by these great public labours found occasional relaxation by short summer excursions into different parts of the kingdom, and in frequent correspondence with some old friends and very warm admirers among his countrymen. In 1785 he wrote to Dr. Beaufort, author of an able and well-known Memoir of a Map of Ireland, to procure for him a skeleton of the enormous species of moose deer, sometimes dug up in the bogs of that country, having an inclination, as he said, to see such a stately product of his native country placed in his hall.

In October 1786, induced by "a sudden fire-side thought," as he expressed it, he and his son proceeded thither, remaining not more than a fortnight; he found time, however, to spend a day and a night at Ballitore, the last opportunity that offered of seeing these early friends on their own soil; and meeting with some of the old domestics of the establishment, not only remembered them perfectly, but behaved with his characteristic kindness and affability: an anecdote of this kind has been already related.

His arrival in Ireland was announced in the chief newspapers in terms of warm admiration, one of which, as these faithful daily chroniclers on the whole give passing opinions pretty fairly, may be quoted—"After an absence of many years, the celebrated Irish orator and British Member of Parliament, Edmund Burke, has arrived in his native country. It is not flattery to say, that he is the boast of the English Senate, and the glory of the Irish nation." One of the first poets in that kingdom wrote some encomiastic verses on the occasion, which Mr. Burke

repaid in prose more than equal in point of fancy and imagination to the tuneful effusion.* It was

* The following, which is the production of another, a Ballitore muse, upon the same occasion, very naturally expresses the feelings of a village on the arrival of such a guest.

ON A VISIT PAID TO BALLITORE,
BY EDMUND BURKE AND HIS SON, IN 1786.

And what though winter's herald hoar
Rudely deforms the trembling spray,
The cheerful vale of Ballitore!—
O was it ever half so gay?

What caused this sudden strange delight?—
Has summer turn'd her steps again?
Or does some comet's radiant flight
This burst of loud applause obtain?

More radiant than the comet's flight,
More welcome than the summer's day,
'Tis Burke, our "ever new delight,"
'Tis Burke appears,—and all is gay.

O fond delusion! idle dream!
Let not these vain ideas rise;
Will he to Griese's silent stream,
Withdraw him from a nation's eyes?

When pomp, and wealth, and fame, and pow'r,
All court him to the splendid seat;
Will he prefer the rural bow'r,
And from admiring crowds retreat?

He will:—that heart no fetters bind,
Repressing mem'ry's grateful swell;
And simple nature pleased that mind,
Where all the nobler virtues dwell.

deemed a little extraordinary that the University of Dublin did not then present him with the honorary

And still he owns this classic shade,
And still this classic shade he loves,
Where once a careless youth he stray'd,
Where now a wond'rous man he moves.

With love, with admiration warm,
Behold us fondly gather round,
To gaze upon that princely form,
And hear once more the man renown'd.

His cordial smile our zeal rewards;
His soothing words our hearts engage;
His noble courtesy regards
The poor man's venerable age.

And he, the youth whose cultur'd taste
A polish'd court's attention drew,
Admires the scenes his father traced,
And greets the friends his father knew.

And you, ye blooming stripling train,
This age's hope, this valley's pride,
What honest rapture fill'd each vein!
How beat each heart while Burke you eyed!

"And this is he, the child of fame,
Who trod our walks from care as free;
Now Indian echoes sound his name:—
Like him, O shall we ever be?"

Advent'rous youths! such talents rare
Hath prescient Heav'n to few assign'd:
But all to imitate may dare
The virtues of that gen'rous mind.

Here let your just desires be found,
The prize shall well the toil requite;
'Tis only with such virtues crown'd
Such splendid talents shine so bright.

degree of doctor of laws, but the heats of politics too often withhold the justest offerings to merit, and he was seldom heard to acknowledge that he had been highly indebted to the education or rather superintendence which he received in that seminary, though in itself a seat of undoubted learning.

In returning to England, the Reverend Doctor Campbell (author of a History of Ireland) happened to sail in the packet with him; "I don't know any thing," said the Doctor to a friend one day, "that gave me so much pleasure as to find that I was to cross the Irish Hellespont in the company of a man of whom I had heard so much. I was extremely sorry that I had not the honour of being known to any one of the passengers who could introduce me to him, but it was not difficult to provoke Mr. Burke to conversation. We were in sight of the hill of Howth just as the sun began to spread his beams. Mr. Burke enjoyed the beauties of the scenery; even the light clouds, which enveloped the top of the hill, did not escape his attention: "I wonder," said he, "that some of the Dublin milliners do not form a head-dress in imitation of those many-coloured clouds, and call it the Howth-cap."

His conversation was rich and captivating; he told me he had passed some days at Lord Kenmare's country-seat, near the lakes of Killarney—that delightful spot, which taste seems to have selected from all that is beautiful in the volume of nature. But his description of it exceeded any thing I had ever read or heard before, particularly when he touched on the flowery race; good heaven! how he clothed the lily in new-born light, and the rose in virgin blushes; in short, it may be said, that he

almost coloured to the eye whatever he described. Speaking of Lord Charlemont, he praised the gentleness of his manners, and the mildness of his temper, and concluded by comparing him to an old picture, whose tints were mellowed by time. When I talked of the state of learning in Ireland, he shook his head, folded his arms, and remained silent for a few minutes. In his person he is about five feet eight inches in height (he was taller), remarkably straight for his years, but his mind is more erect than his body. There is a good deal of placidity in his countenance, but nothing of striking dignity, and, from his nose, I think that no man can sneer with more ease and effect if he chooses.

Some weeks after his return, calling in at a place in town then much frequented by lovers of antiquity and of the arts, he fell into discourse with a gentleman, a Mr. T., who possessed good taste and feeling enough to preserve the following minutes of the conversation. It must ever be a source of keen regret that so many others who were honoured by his society did not prove themselves equally worthy of it by preserving his remarks.

"December the 6th, I happened to be in Mr. Townley's study; about eleven o'clock Mr. Burke and the Reverend Doctor King came in to view Mr. Townley's fine collection of statues. Mr. Burke seemed highly pleased with the whole, particularly that of the Baian Homer. Having paid many just compliments to the taste of the collector, he entered into conversation with me in so easy and friendly a manner, that if I was charmed a few minutes before with the taste and judicious reflection of the scholar,

I was not less delighted with the man. I showed him an old manuscript copy of Homer (written, I believe, in the tenth century); he read a few passages in it with the greatest fluency, and criticised some of the critics who had written on the father of immortal verse. He invited me to breakfast with him the next morning, without so much as knowing my name. I promised to do myself that honour. My name is Edmund Burke, said he, just as he was going out of the door, I live in Gerard Street, Soho. I called the next morning about nine; it was excessively cold; I was shown into the drawing-room, and in a few minutes Mr. Burke entered, and shook me by the hand in the most friendly manner.

Mr. B. Have you been long out of Ireland, Sir?

T. Some years.

Mr. B. I paid that country a visit last summer, for the purpose of seeing a sister, a widow (Mrs. French, I believe); I had not seen it for twenty years before.

T. It is very much changed within the last twenty years.

Mr. B. Very much for the better.

T. A spirit of industry has pervaded almost every quarter of the kingdom; the morals of the people are improved, the country-gentlemen, in many parts, have relinquished the favourite amusements of the chace for the plough.

Mr. B. Not as much as I could wish, but still more than I expected. As to agriculture, it may be called the eighth science. "We may talk what we please," says Cowley, "of lilies and lions rampant, and spread eagles in fields d'or or d'argent, but if

heraldry were guided by reason, a plough in a field arable would be the most noble and ancient arms."

T. Very true, Sir, but it is said that the physical situation of Ireland is not favourable to the progress of tillage.

Mr. B. I have often heard so, but experience proves the contrary. I saw, and I saw it with pleasure, in my little tour through some parts of the south of Ireland, two or three mountains clothed with luxuriant grass, that in my time was scarcely covered with barren heath, and half starved briars.

Breakfast was now brought in; young Mr. Burke and Dr. King were present.

T. There are many passages in the ancient laws of Ireland that evince that agriculture flourished at a very early period in that country.

Mr. B. Do you mean in the Brehon laws? I wish they were translated

T. I wish so too; I am sure the University of Dublin is very much obliged to you, Sir, for the fragments which you presented of the sea-bright collection; they are valuable, as they contain many particulars that shed light on the manners and customs of the ancient Irish; but life is short, and, in some respect, it would be a pity that a man of genius should waste his time in such pursuits.

Mr. B. To set a man of genius down to such a task, would be to yoke—a courser of the sun in a mud cart. No, no, one of your cool, plodding, half-burnt bricks of the creation would be the fittest person in the world for such studies.

T. Colonel Vallancy has laboured hard in that mine.

Mr. B. Yes, in that race he has carried off the prize of industry from all his competitors, and if he has done nothing more, he has wakened a spirit of curiosity in that line, but he has built too much on etymology, and that is a very sandy foundation.

Dr. King. Ireland was famed for piety and learning at a very early period.

Mr. B. Bede says so, and several other writers.

Dr. King. Can you speak Irish?

Mr. B. I could speak a little of it when I was a boy, and I can remember a few words and phrases still. Poetry was highly cultivated by the ancient Irish; some of their kings were so smitten with the love of song, as to exchange the sceptre for the harp.

T. The bards were very much protected and encouraged, but having indulged too much in satire and ribaldry, they were rather dreaded than esteemed; and, at one time, the whole body was on the eve of being banished, if St. Columb-kill had not interfered.

Mr. B. Sedulius was an excellent poet.

T. Yes, his Latin poetry is very much admired.

Mr. B. I read one of his hymns, that glowed with all the poet; the spirit of it might be said to ascend like the spirit of a Christian martyr in the midst of flames, but I never could light on his works.

T. Nor I neither, but many of his verses are scattered through Colgan.

Mr. B. Wherever they are scattered they will shine like stars. There was a poet that used to compose a little in his native language when I was a boy, I forget his name.

T. Dignum, I suppose.

Mr. B. Yes, yes; he could neither read nor write, nor speak any language but his own. I have seen some of his effusions translated into English, but was assured, by judges, that they fell far short of the original, yet they contained some graces "snatched beyond the reach of art." I remember one thought in an address to a friend; the poet advises him to lose no time in paying his addresses to a young lady, for that she was of age, and, as a proof of it, "upon her cheek he saw love's letter sealed with a damask rose." Spencer, who was himself a bard, says, that the Irish poetry was sprinkled with many pretty flowers. I wish they were collected in one nosegay.

T. Yes, Sir, but there is no encouragement.

Mr. B. No, not in this rust of the iron age. I wish, however, that some able, industrious, and patient pen, would give a history of that country; it is much wanted.

T. Great expectations were formed from Doctor Leland; he had leisure, talents, and almost every opportunity. When Lord Chesterfield was Viceroy of that kingdom, he was told that the Doctor intended to follow up a prospectus he had published on the subject of a voluminous history; his lordship one day at levee applauded the Doctor's intentions, but requested that he would make it a pleasant one.

Mr. B. Your pleasant historians should be read with caution. Leland promised a voluminous history, and so far he has kept his promise, but he has not done justice to all.

T. It is said that he had an eye to a mitre.

Mr. B. Mitres and coronets will dazzle, but the truth is, he had an eye to his bookseller, and, to be candid, he went over it with a heavy hand.

T. He has scarce dipped into the earlier ages.

Mr. B. He was no antiquary, but he might have said a little more on the subject. Hooker says, "the reason why first we do admire those things which are greatest, and secondly those things which are ancientest, is, because the one is least distant from the infinite substance, the other from the infinite continuance of God." Neither has he detailed with candour the feuds betwixt the houses of Desmond and Butler.

T. The implacable hatred that existed betwixt the two is astonishing.

Mr. B. Struggles for power. I remember an anecdote of one of the Desmonds, I don't know which, who happened to be severely wounded in an engagement with a party of the Butlers; one of the latter threw him on his shoulders to carry him off in triumph, and as he passed along, tauntingly asked him, "Ah, Desmond, where are you now?" though quite feeble from the loss of blood, he collected all his expiring strength, and exclaimed, "Where am I? I am where I ought to be, on the neck of my enemy."

The conversation turned on poetry, which Mr. Burke called "the art of substantiating shadows, and of lending existence to nothing." He praised Milton for the judicious choice of his epithets; this led him to say a few words on the use and abuse of those flowery adjectives, as Pontanus calls them, and

lamented that some person of taste did not collect a garland of them out of the English Poets, as Textor had out of the Latin, which laid every classical scholar under great obligation to him, as he had plucked the fairest flowers that sipped castalian dew.

" Geography, he said, was an earthly subject, but a heavenly study." One of the company happened to mention some gentlemen who intended to promote discoveries in the interior parts of Africa. Mr. Burke said, the intention was truly laudable ; " Africa," he said, " was worth exploring, it seemed as if nature, in some great convulsion or revolution of her empire, had fled to that quarter with all her treasures, some of which she had concealed in the bowels of the earth, but the surface exhibited such abundance and variety of the vegetable and animal race, that a few miles would enrich the conquests of natural history. Witness on the very shores of that continent—the cabbage-tree, that towered into all the sublimity of the pine, and the luxuriance of the spreading oak, and yet so tender that a few strokes of a sabre were sufficient to lay it prostrate on the earth. Africa was rightly called the mother of monsters, for there was not a sufficient number of minor animals elsewhere to feed the huge beasts that ranged the forests in that country. He was persuaded the interior was healthy, civilized, and so fertile, that the reaper trod on the heels of the sower.

" But the thirst of European avarice and cruelty had raised a barrier round the coasts of that quarter, which prevented all communication with the inoffensive inhabitants.

The sight of a white face was sufficient to make their curly locks stand on end. Death is natural to man, but slavery unnatural; and the moment you strip a man of his liberty, you strip him of all his virtues; you convert his heart into a dark hole, in which all the vices conspire against you." Towards the close of the conversation, he asked me if I was acquainted with Mr. Sheridan; I answered, that I was very sorry I could not boast that honour. I shall have the pleasure, said he, of introducing you to him, for he is one of the best natured men in the universe; he accompanied me, on my departure, to the door, and told me that Dr. King was a very learned man, assured me that he would be very happy to see me at Beaconsfield, "throw yourself into a coach," said he, "come down and make my house your inn."

Part of the short time he had spent in Ireland was, as may be supposed from what we have already noticed, devoted to Lord Charlemont, for whom he at all times, entertained a very warm regard, frequently terming him "one of the chief ornaments of Dublin." To this Nobleman he was in the habit of giving letters of introduction to all his friends of consideration proceeding thither on business or curiosity, among whom, about this time, were Mr. (afterwards Sir Philip) Francis, Mr. Nevill, Mr. Shippen, an American traveller, and others. He also transmitted to his Lordship, about this period, a bust of the late Marquis of Rockingham, with whom he had been extremely intimate since 1752, when they became acquainted at Rome, on their travels: it was a present from the Marchioness. Soon afterward Mr. Burke, on being elected a

Member of the Royal Irish Academy, wrote him a letter of thanks, as its President.

As specimens of that air of interest and elegance he was accustomed to throw over the common affair of a letter of introduction, two or three of this description are subjoined :—

" Gerrard-street, June 1, 1787.

" My dear Lord,

" I have an high respect for your Lordship of old, as I trust you know ; and as I have the best wishes for my friend Mr. Francis, I am exceedingly desirous that he should have an opportunity of paying his compliments to the person in Ireland the most worthy the acquaintance of a man of sense and virtue. Mr. Francis has not been in Ireland since the days of his childhood, but he has been employed in a manner that does honour to the country that has given him birth. When he sees your Lordship, he will perceive that ancient morals have not yet deserted at least that part of the world which he revisits, and you will be glad to receive for a while a citizen that has only left his country to be the more extensively serviceable to mankind. May I beg your Lordship to present my most respectful and most affectionate compliments, and those of Mrs. Burke and my son, and all that are of our little family, to Lady Charlemont. I hope that Mr. Francis will bring back such an account of the health of your Lordship, and all yours, as may make us happy."

" Beaconsfield, July 19, 1787.

" My dear Lord,

" Mr. Francis called upon me in his way to his own house, charmed, as I expected he would be, with

your character and conversation, and infinitely obliged by your reception of him. Give me leave to convey his thanks to you, and to add mine to them.—Every motive induces me to wish your house provided with all the ornaments that are worthy of it: the bust you desire is that which is most essential, and that in which you combine your taste, your friendship, and your principles. When I go to town, I shall see Mr. Nollekens, and hasten him as much as I can: there was no bust taken from Lord Rockingham during his life-time. This is made from a masque taken from his face after his death, and of course must want that animation which I am afraid can never be given to it, without hazarding the groundwork of the features. Tassie has made a profile in his glass, which is I think the best likeness; I mean, uncoloured likeness, which exists. I will recommend it to Nollekens; perhaps he may make some advantage of it; though I have observed that artists seldom endeavour to profit of each other's works, though not in the exact line which they profess."

"My dear Lord,

"If I were to write all that is in my heart and head relative to you, and to your proceedings,* I should write volumes. At present I abstain from any subject but that which at this instant may give your Lordship occasion to remember me.

"My friend Mr. Shippen, of Pennsylvania, a very agreeable, sensible, and accomplished young man, will have the honour of delivering this to your Lord-

* On the Regency question.

ship. I flatter myself that you will think of him as I do: and, if you do, I have no doubt that he will find, under your Lordship's protection, every thing that he can expect (and he expects a great deal) from Ireland. He has been for some time upon his travels on the Continent of Europe; and, after this tour, he pays us the compliment of thinking that there are things and persons worth seeing in Ireland. For one person I am sure I can answer, and am not afraid of disappointing him, when I tell him, that in no country will he find a better pattern of elegance, good breeding, and virtue. I shall say nothing further to recommend my friend to one to whom a young gentleman, desirous of every sort of improvement, is, by that circumstance, fully recommended. America and we are no longer under the same Crown; but, if we are united by mutual good will, and reciprocal good offices, perhaps it may do almost as well. Mr. Shippen will give you no unfavourable specimen of the *new world*."

His Lordship, in return, thought he could not do better for his particular friends, bound to England, than to consign them to the care of one so celebrated, and so capable of affording them instruction and amusement. Among these, about this time, was Mr. Hardy, a member of the Irish House of Commons, and destined to be his Lordship's biographer, who, although already known to Mr. Burke, seemed to feel the charm of his society and amiable qualities, with additional force, during this visit.

"He was," says that gentleman, "social, hospitable, of pleasing access, and most agreeably communicative. One of the most satisfactory days per-

haps that I ever passed in my life, was going with him *tête à tête,* from London to Beaconsfield. He stopped at Uxbridge whilst his horses were feeding, and happening to meet some gentlemen of I know not what Militia, who appeared to be perfect strangers to him, he entered into discourse with them at the gateway of the inn. His conversation at that moment completely exemplified what Johnson said of him, ' That you could not meet Burke under a shed without saying that he was an extraordinary man.'

" He was altogether uncommonly attractive and agreeable. Every object of the slightest notoriety as we passed along, whether of natural or local history, furnished him with abundant materials for conversation. The house, at Uxbridge, where the treaty was held during Charles the First's time; the beautiful and undulating grounds of Bulstrode, formerly the residence of Chancellor Jeffries; and Waller's tomb, in Beaconsfield church-yard, which, before we went home, we visited, and whose character as a gentleman, a poet, and an orator, he shortly delineated, but with exquisite felicity of genius, altogether gave an uncommon interest to his eloquence; and although one-and-twenty years have elapsed since that day, I entertain the most vivid and pleasing recollection of it."

The most flattering testimony yet borne to the superiority of his public and private character, and to his senatorial and literary talents, appeared in 1787, in the celebrated Latin preface to Bellendenus, by its celebrated author Dr. Parr; * an offering certainly

* Since this was written, Dr. Parr has paid the debt of nature.

of no common value either in the terms in which it was expressed, or in the quarter from which it came; a characteristic tribute of unfeigned admiration from the most learned to the most eloquent man of the age. It is known that the Doctor has written an epitaph for him which, however, he has not yet thought proper to make public.

Alluding to Mr. Burke in conversation with a friend in 1814, he mentioned this epitaph, saying it was written with the whole collected force of his mind, with his choicest Latinity, and consequently that it cost him more effort than any thing else he had written. But he continued, on showing it to a sagacious friend, the latter said, "it is very good, but there is no heart in it.' 'True,' rejoined the Doctor, 'I had no heart when I wrote it;' the explanation of which is, that the Doctor thought Mr. Burke had sinned so much against liberty when he attacked the French Revolution, that his warmer feelings towards him were become deadened or extinguished.

His own taste in epitaph, or rather character-writing, was again put in requisition, by the completion, in August, 1788, of the splendid, and in this country unequalled, mausoleum to the memory of the Marquis of Rockingham, erected about a mile in front of Wentworth House, in Yorkshire, from which, as well as from the surrounding country, it forms a noble and interesting object 90 feet high. The interior of the base is a dome supported by twelve doric columns, with niches for the statues of the deceased Nobleman and his friends, among whom the distinguished writer of the following piece now takes his stand. The

inscription, for force, precision, and fitness, has perhaps, like the mausoleum itself, no equal among the mortuary remains of the country:

"CHARLES, MARQUIS OF ROCKINGHAM.

"A statesman in whom constancy, fidelity, sincerity, and directness, were the sole instruments of his policy. His virtues were his arts. A clear, sound, unadulterated sense, not perplexed with intricate design, or disturbed by ungoverned passion, gave consistency, dignity, and effect, to all his measures. In Opposition, he respected the principles of Government; in Administration, he provided for the liberties of the people. He employed his moments of power in realizing every thing which he had promised in a popular situation. This was the distinguishing mark of his conduct. After twenty-four years of service to the public, in a critical and trying time, he left no debt of just expectation unsatisfied.

"By his prudence and patience he brought together a party which it was the great object of his labours to render permanent, not as an instrument of ambition, but as a living depository of principle.

"The virtues of his public and private life were not in him of different characters. It was the same feeling, benevolent, liberal mind that, in the internal relations of life, conciliates the unfeigned love of those who see men as they are, which made him an inflexible patriot. He was devoted to the cause of liberty, not because he was haughty and intractable, but because he was beneficent and humane.

"Let his successors, who from this house behold this monument, reflect that their conduct will make it their glory or their reproach. Let them be persuaded that similarity of manners, not proximity of blood, gives them an interest in this statue.

"Remember—Resemble—Persevere."

END OF VOL. I.

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